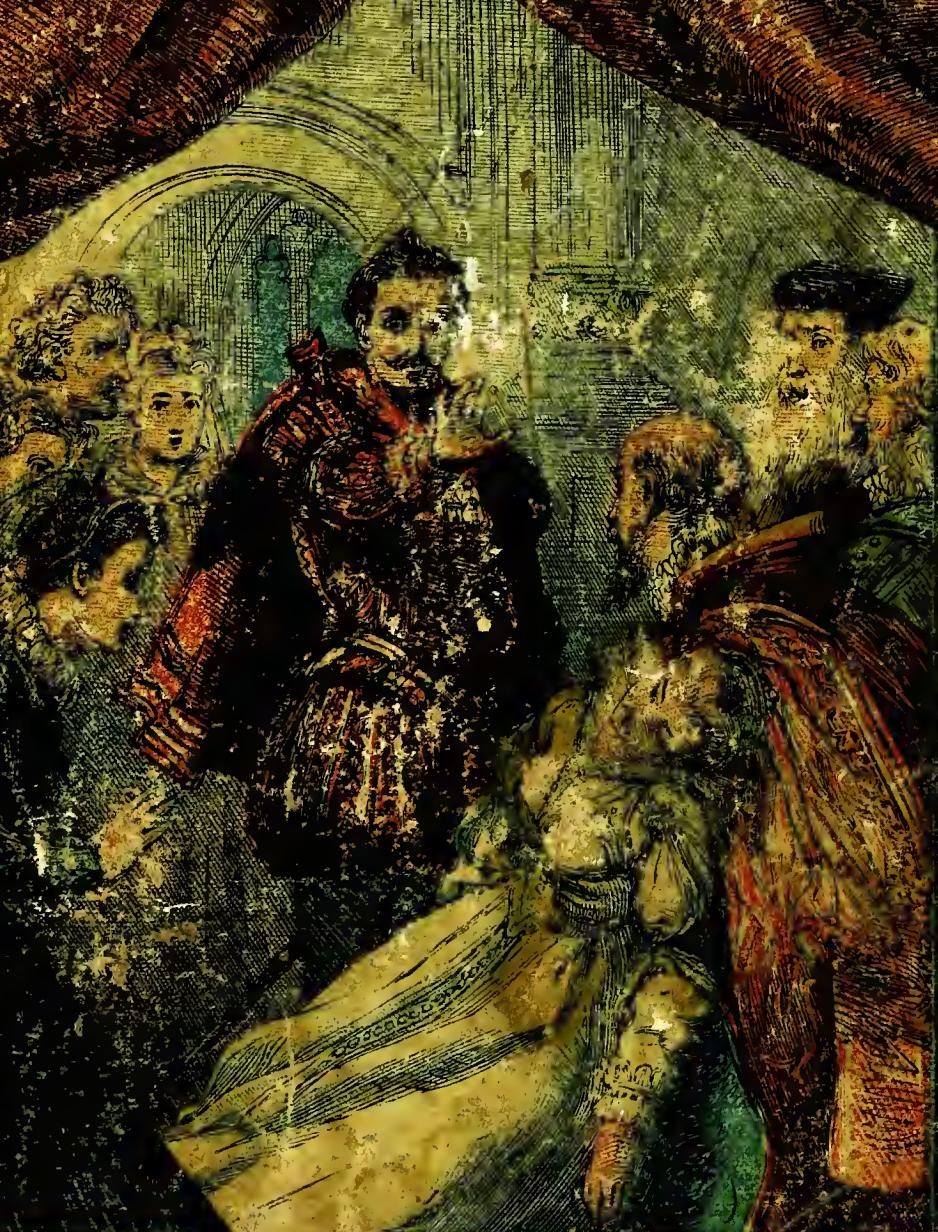


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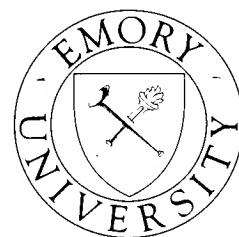
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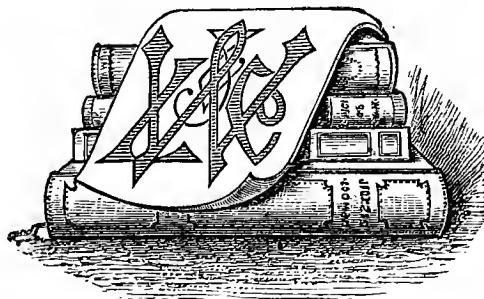
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PREFACE.

BEFORE THE PIECE.

“THE play, the play’s the thing, in which I’ll catch the conscience of the king.” So Hamlet, and the spell worked. Other consciences than kings’, too, have been caught by plays, and there’s little room for doubt, except with those who think that all amusement’s sin, that plays have worked more good than evil in this world. I am aware that some of our countrymen and countrywomen prefer Exeter Hall to other large buildings in the Strand, near or neighbouring the Adelphi; but, then, again it has been hinted that these same people like that bare hall because the scenes enacted there are “really just as good as a play.” And it has been gravely argued by some who have wit and are not without worth, that, of the two professions of preaching and playing, the playcrs have best instructed their hearers. Perhaps it is the wiser plan to take a little of each, and, while holding with the one, not to entirely eschew the other. “How to make the best of both worlds” might apply to the world that is a stage, and the stage that is a world. Here, at any rate, is a little book of modern mysteries, a trifle after the manner of the mysteries of three centuries ago, but which we christen “Acting Charades.” Mr. J. C. Brough and Mrs. Dolby are responsible for the Acts which ill-nature might characterize as full of double-dealing, for their end and aim would seem to be at once to mystify and to explain. Let this gentleman and lady bear, then, all the odium that may attach to such duplex movements; and when they come to be judged by

their fruits, may they be found guilty—of success. For one of the Children's Plays a highly-esteemed author and good gentleman, well known in society, has to answer; and the second, a pretty thing for the lads and lassies to dress and speak, is to the credit of Mr. John Sherer, a writer who has done no mean work in his time. A favourite writer in our "Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine," who signs herself St. Swithin, contributes the last piece, the Extravaganza; and "Proserpine" will be found to go well. In fine, we hope our readers, fair and unfair, will find the fare here full of fun; and so farewell to all—good night! The curtain's up.

S. O. B.



AFTER THE PIECE.

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Acting Charades,

BULL'S-EYE.

FIRST SYLLABLE—BULLS.

CHARACTERS.

TERENCE O'CONNOR. *A broth of a boy.*

MR. BLARNEY. *A fine ould Irish gentleman.*

NORAH. *His only daughter.*

COSTUMES.—*Terence* may wear a shabby tail-coat, knee-breeches (or rolled-up trousers), a high stand-up collar (cut out of paper), and a very battered hat. Old *Blarney* should be attired in a similar costume: his hair must be whitened by Time or the flour-dredger. *Norah* must dress in a very simple style.

Enter TERENCE.

Terence. Och ! it's a sin and a shame to see a fine young man cut off in his prime, and made miserable for the rest of his life by a pair of elegant black eyes. Though it's my own tongue that's to blame entirely, for if I'd kept it still I might have gone on talking to her till this present moment. I was in too great a hurry to pop the delicate question ; for though we had known each other ever since we were babies in arms, it wasn't decent of me to try to strike up a match at our very first meeting. So when I said to her “Norah, darlint, I mane to talk to Father Maguire to-morrow,” she got into such a towering passion that I was glad to get out of her

sight. Since then I've never clapped eyes on her, though it's many a time I've peeped through the keyhole, and seen her looking so disconsolate, that I've felt terribly inclined to make it up with her. I know she's sorry she drove me away from her side at the very moment I was kneeling at her feet, and offering her my heart and hand, to say nothing of the pig and the field of praties. She must be the most miserable creature in the world ; but what's her misery compared to mine ? I can't even sleep a wink at night for dreaming of her ; and though I've banished her from my thoughts entirely, I can think of nothing else, Bedad ! here comes her ould father. I thought the family had gone to bed.

Enter BLARNEY.

Blarney. I'm sure I heard somebody. Who can it be at this time o' night ?

Terence. Good evening, Mister Blarney.

Blarney. Sure then and I did hear somebody.

Terence. Your stupid ould ears have deceived you, Mister Blarney. There hasn't been a soul near the place, barring the pig.

Blarney. That's as fine a bull as I've heard for a long time. Sure, haven't you yourself been lurking about the premises ?

Terence. Bedad ! I clean forgot that. Maybe it was me that disturbed you ?

Blarney. Maybe it was ; and if it's not troubling you too much, Mister O'Connor, might I be so bould as to ask what brings you here so late ?

Terence. Your daughter's to blame entirely. She's refused to marry me ; and as I've made a vow never to speak another word to her, I thought I'd just come and say "farewell" before I started by the train for Ameriky.

Blarney. Ameriky ! Why, the boy's mad ! Norah, the darlint, will break her little heart

Terence. Never fear that. If she'd a heart at all, she'd never have been hard-hearted enough to have broken mine.

Barney. I'll call her out at once. I wouldn't have her lose your elegant pig and your beautiful crop of praties for the world.

Terence. That's foinly said, Mr. Blarney. But, depend upon it, the girl wont listen to you.

Blarney. You're mistaken, entirely. If she was as deaf as a post she'd listen to her poor ould father. (*Calling.*) Here, Norah ! Norah machree, come here this minute.

Terence. Stop a bit. I'll turn my back upon her, and listen to what she says. It's getting dark, and she won't know who I am.

Blarney. Oh, you're a clever boy.

Enter NORAH.

Norah. Was it calling me you were, father dear ? If it's supper your wanting, it wont be ready for ten minutes at least.

Blarney. Bother the supper, I've got bad news for you, my jewel.

Norah. Good gracious ! Has anything happened to the pig ?

Blarney. No ; saints be praised, the pig is all right ! But poor Terence O'Connor is going to Ameriky.

Norah. Oh ! don't say so, if you love me. (*Crying.*) What shall I do without the dear boy ? And it's I that's driven him away. Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! (*Puts apron to her eyes, walks across, and runs against TERENCE.*) Holy Mother ! who's that ? Why, I declare its Terence himself. Terence, darlint, you wont be leaving your own Norah ?

Terence. It isn't me, machree, it's a gentleman from Dublin. [*BLARNEY bursts into a violent fit of laughter.*]

Norah. (Aside.) It's Terence himself. There's not another boy in Limerick that could make such a beautiful bull as that.

I'll tease him a little. (*Aloud to TERENCE.*) If you please, Mister Gentleman from Dublin, was it you that brought the message from Terence?

Terence. It was, miss.

Norah. And will you be seeing the poor boy again?

Terence. Yes, I intend calling upon him before he takes his departure.

Norah. Then tell him, sir, that the young woman he's running away from forgives him, although he did steal her poor father's pig. [BLARNEY tries to stifle his laughter.]

Terence (*Turning round.*) That's not true! Mister Blarney, I appeal to you. Did I ever carry off one of your family?

Blarney. You never did, sir. Saints forbid that I should suspect a gentleman from Dublin! It was the boy Terence that stole the helpless little animal.

Terence. I can't stand this any longer. Norah! Mister Blarney! Do you want to drive me out of my senses? Are you playing the fool with me, or did I really steal a pig unbeknown to myself? It's Terence O'Connor that asks. (BLARNEY and NORAH laugh.) Oh! plase don't laugh.

Norah. Will you promise, then, never to get angry with your own Norah?

Terence. Yes, darlint.

Norah. And that you'll never think of leaving Ould Ireland again?

Terence. I'll promise anything that's rasonable, if you'll only promise to make ould Mister Blarney my mother-in-law.

Blarney. Terence, you're a broth of a boy, and I don't mind giving my consent to your marriage, providing Norah's agreeable.

Terence. Say the word, honey, and call me back from Ameriky.

Norah. Get away with you, do

Bull's-Eye.

Terence. Where to, darlint?

Norah. To Father Maguire's, if you please. (*They embrace.*)

Blarney. The boy's bulls will make his fortune yet. Come to supper, my darlint! [Exeunt.

SECOND SYLLABLE.—EYE

Characters.

MR. TESTY. *An irascible old gentleman.*

MR. RAPID. *A fast young gentleman.*

MRS. TESTY. *A sympathetic old lady.*

DORA. *A charming young lady.*

COSTUMES.—As the above characters are supposed to be gentlemen and ladies of the present period, there will be no difficulty in finding suitable dresses. *Rapid* ought to be attired in a smart morning suit. Should a juvenile performer take the part of *Mr. Testy* he will require a very high white cravat and a pair of spectacles, to make himself appear sufficiently venerable.

Enter RAPID, with bandage over right eye.

Rapid. (*Talking very fast.*) Treat, this! Fancy getting a black eye to-day, just as I am about to make the acquaintance of my beloved governor's old friend *Testy* and his niece, the lovely and accomplished *Dora*. How very provoking! Never had such a thing before, though I'm turned two-and twenty. Let me see—22 by 365 gives something over 8000. I've actually existed for 8000 days, and never experienced till this morning the delights of a black eye. Now, I don't object to black eyes as a rule, but I do object to having one to-day. It's some consolation that I got it while doing my duty as a defender of the rights of property. Coming up Regent Street I see a charming young lady looking in bonnet-shop, while a repulsive young man is picking her pocket. I alarm the first and collar the second. The young lady faints and

is carried into shop by elderly female. The young man shows fight, gives me a back-hander, which effectively closes my right eye and wakes the lion within me. I struggle with pugnacious young man, and succeed in getting from him the purse of sensitive young lady. The disappointed young man breaks away from me and rushes blindly into the arms of a vigilant policeman. I enter shop, throw myself at the feet of convalescent young lady, and restore to her the purse. Emotional elderly female weeps, embraces me, and thanks me in the name of her niece, whose looks express intense gratitude. I rush out of shop, call a Hansom, drive to the nearest butcher, purchase half a pound of beef-steak, and clap it on eye damaged by dishonest but muscular young man. I then drive home, wash, dress, and remove beef-steak. I turn out again, jump into another Hansom, and drive here to meet, according to appointment, the lovely and accomplished female whom my governor wants me to marry. He and old Testy have arranged everything ; and if Dora likes me, and I like her, there will be nothing to prevent us entering into the blessed state of matrimony next week — Nothing but this horrible black eye ! I'm half afraid it will upset the pretty little scheme which has been concocted by the old gentleman. How can I hope to make a favourable impression on a simple-minded girl with this ! (*Removes bandage and shows black eye.*) I wonder how its getting on ? I wish there was a looking-glass in the room. I must try to keep it covered, as I don't want to be taken for a prize-fighter.

Enter Mes. TESTY.

Mrs. T. How do you do, Mr. Rapid ? I have long looked forward to this meeting.

Rapid. (*Covering his black eye with pocket-handkerchief.*) My dear madam, I am delighted to make your acquaintance.

[*Places his left hand over eye and gives her his right.*

Mrs. T. I saw your papa last week, and learnt from him

that you were disposed to regard my niece with a favourable eye. (*Aside.*) I wonder why he keeps up his handkerchief.

Rapid. Oh yes! (*Aside.*) I should be sorry to let her see my unfavourable eye.

Mrs. T. (*Aside.*) I declare he's weeping. His wicked father wishes him to contract a marriage that is repugnant to him. (*Aloud.*) Young man, look me in the face. You love another!

Rapid. You are quite mistaken, madam. My heart has never yet been wounded by the arrows of Master Cupid. (*Aside.*) What is the stupid old woman driving at?

Mrs. T. Do not attempt to deceive me, young man. One blighted being can feel for another. I, who was driven by a father's threats to accept the hand of gentleman that I didn't care two pins for, can understand those bitter tears that you try in vain to check! (*Weeps.*)

Rapid. Really, Mrs. Testy, I am at a loss to comprehend your meaning. My father never threatened me in his life.

Mrs. T. You play your part well, young man. It is noble of you to attempt to screen your bad father; but, as I said before, you cannot deceive me. I will leave you to complete your self-sacrifice.

Rapid. You're very kind, I'm sure.

Mrs. T. (*Gazing at him with an expression of pity.*) Poor young man! Allow me to embrace you. [*Rushes into his arms, then bursts into a fit of crying, and Exit.*]

Rapid. What a remarkable old person! She seems to be somewhat mad. I hope Dora doesn't take after her. I wonder where I can have met her before; her face seems quite familiar to me. Oh for another slice of beef! How this troublesome eye of mine smarts.

Enter MR. TESTY on RAPID's left.

I wonder whether I could find the cook.

Testy. (In a loud voice.) Good morning, Master Reginald?

Rapid. (Starting.) Good gracious, how you made me jump!

Testy. My name is Testy! (Offers hand to RAPID, who in taking it exposes his black eye for a moment.)

Rapid. I am proud to meet so old a friend of my fathe (Aside.) I hope he didn't catch sight of the eye.

Testy. You've commenced the battle early.

Rapid. Oh yes—exactly so. (Aside.) He must have seen it.

Testy. Well, there's nothing like punctuality. Many a match has been spoiled for want of it.

Rapid. (Aside.) He evidently takes me for a prize-fighter.

Testy. You've not seen Dora yet? Poor girl! her nerves received a dreadful shock this morning.

Rapid. I'm very sorry to hear that. (Aside.) I wonder how they'll bear the second shock—the appearance of my right optic?

Testy. I'd advise you to say nothing to her about the ring this morning.

Rapid. The ring! Oh, of course not. I should be sorry ever to allude to it in her presence.

Testy. What, sir! Do you mean to tell me that you will never talk to her about the ring.

Rapid. Never, sir! I could not degrade myself so.

Testy. Degrade yourself by marrying my niece! What do you mean, you scoundrel?

Rapid. Now don't be cross. I never said a word about marriage, so it's evident we don't clearly understand each other.

Testy. You said you would never speak to her about the ring!

Rapid. You mean the wedding ring! (Laughing.) I declare I thought you were talking about the prize-ring.

Testy. (Haughtily.) Sir, I have a horror of prize-fighting,

Bull's-Eye.

and am not in the habit of talking about that ring with which you seem so familiar.

Rapid. Forgive me, sir. I did not intend to hurt your feelings.

Testy. Well, then, shake hands. By the way, what's the matter with your eye?

Rapid. Nothing worth speaking of. Merely a slight discolouration of the surrounding parts. I think it advisable not to expose it. (*Drops handkerchief.* **TESTY** seizes him by the shoulders.)

Testy. You call that a slight discolouration! I should very much like to know, sir, what you consider a black eye. How dare you come here, sir, with such an eye as that?

Rapid. Allow me to explain. This blackened optic is an honourable disfigurement. **It** was obtained in a good fight.

Testy. I thought as much. You are a disgrace to your family.

Rapid. Sir, I did not come here to be insulted.

Testy. No, sir; you came here to insult us.

Rapid. Do you take me for a prize-fighter?

Testy. I do, sir; you carry the badge of your calling upon your face.

Rapid. I will leave this house at once.

Testy. My servants shall kick you out, sir.

Enter MRS. TESTY and DORA.

Mrs. T. Good gracious! What is all this noise about? (*Sees RAPID's black eye, and screams.*) I declare my wicked husband has actually given that blighted being a black eye!

Dora. Oh, aunt! Why that's the brave young gentleman who restored my purse to me.

Mrs. T. So it is. How foolish of me to forget him! Young man—dear Reginald, embrace me again! (*Rushes into his arms.*)

Testy. What's the meaning of this, I should like to know? Perhaps you can tell me, Dora?

Dora. Oh, uncle dear! That's the gentleman who fought that horrible man in Regent Street this morning, and got back all my money. (*Aside.*) What a dear young man he is! That black eye which he got in defending me quite becomes him.

Testy. Reginald, my boy, I have wronged you. My niece is yours. Take her—be happy. (*Weeps.*)

Mrs. T. Ah, me! It's too late now to save the poor young man from his doom. (*Weeps.*)

Dora. Oh, Mr. Rapid, forgive my uncle; he is always in such a hurry! You can't know whether you like me yet!

Testy. Nonsense! Of course he likes you. Don't be self-willed.

Dora. I'm sure I shall faint.

Rapid. Faint, darling Dora, by all means. This arm that was raised in your defence a few hours ago shall support you now. [*Exeunt.*]

THE WHOLE WORD.—BULL'S EYE.

Characters.

SMITH, BROWN, JONES, and ROBINSON, *Effective Members of the Puddledock Volunteer Rifle Corps.*

SERGEANT BANG, *Drill Instructor.* TOMKINS, *a Recruit.*

COSTUMES.—The uniform of the Puddledock Corps may be got ready in a very short space of time. Any description of coat or jacket may be worn. The belts and gaiters are to be formed of brown paper, and cocked hats of the same material may be substituted for caps. Tomkins will not wear the uniform of the corps.

Enter SERGEANT BANG, SMITH, BROWN, JONES, and ROBINSON, marching in single file.

Bang. Halt! To the right face. Stand at ease! (*Volun-*

teers go through the motions indicated by words of command.)
Attention! Privates Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson, you are to proceed at once to the practice-ground to shoot off the tie made by you for the Puddledock Challenge Cup. You will fire one shot each at three hundred yards.

Smith. The marker hasn't come yet, sergeant. I've set Tomkins to look for him.

Bang. Oh! then you'd better wait here till he comes. Stand at ease—stand easy a moment. [Exit.

Brown. I say, Smith, if you hadn't made me laugh I should have won the prize last night.

Smith. My dear boy, I didn't make you laugh; it was Jones.

Jones. I merely called your attention to little Dobson's elegant position while firing at the long range from the knee. It was much better that you should lose the match than miss the chance of seeing Dobson in the regulation position.

Brown. Poor little chap, he looked for all the world like one of those fat Chinese idols

Smith. I thought he'd never get up again.

Brown. I shall win to day, I'm confident.

Smith. I'm not at all sure of that; something tells me that I shall come off the conqueror.

Jones. Now don't be too fast. I tell you beforehand I shall make a bull's-eye with my shot.

Robinson. I wish I was as certain of success as you all seem to be. (All laugh.)

Smith. Poor fellow—did he want the Challenge Cup!

Brown. Let me give you a bit of advice, Robinson. Shut your eye and press the trigger at the same time, and you'll perhaps have just such good luck as you had last night. If you aim at the bull's-eye you are sure to lose.

Robinson. I mean to try my best for the prize, in spite of your chaff.

Jones. Fancy Robinson the champion shot of Puddledock
Wouldn't he give himself airs !

Robinson. Not I ! I shouldn't give myself half so many
airs as some people I could mention do now.

Enter Tomkins and Sergeant Bang.

Tomkins. The marker's come ! And almost everybody
belonging to Puddledock waiting to see the sport. Oh, don't
I wish I was an effective !

Bang, Squad : Attention !—Right about face—March !

[*Exeunt Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson*
Now, Mr. Tomkins, let me put you through your facings.
Attention ! Keep your head up, sir ; shoulders square to the
front ; knees perfectly straight.

Tomkins. Can't I go and see the shooting ?

Bang. No talking, sir. Now, sir, attend to me. On the
word "Face" place the hollow of the right foot smartly
against the left heel, keeping the shoulders square to the front.
On the word "Two" raise the toes, and turn a quarter circle
to the right on both heels, which must be placed together,
To the right. (*Tomkins draws back foot.*) As you were !
Wait till the word "face" is given. To the right face ! (*Tom-
kins draws back left foot.*) As you were ! The left heel
must never quit the ground. Pay attention, sir ! To the
right face ! (*Tomkins executes the order correctly.*) Two !
(*Tomkins tries to turn round to the left, and tumbles down.*)
As you were ! Don't you know your right from your left ?

Tomkins. Oh yes ! I know, but I forget.

Bang. Must try to remember, sir. Here come the com-
petitors ! I wonder who's the winner ?

Enter Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson.

Tomkins. What news, Brown ?

Brown. Bad news. I'll read you the score. (*Reads paper.*)
"Robinson, three ; Jones, one ; Smith, none ; Brown, none."

Tomkins. What, is old Robinson first?

Smith. Yes, by accident.

Brown. Jones made me laugh again.

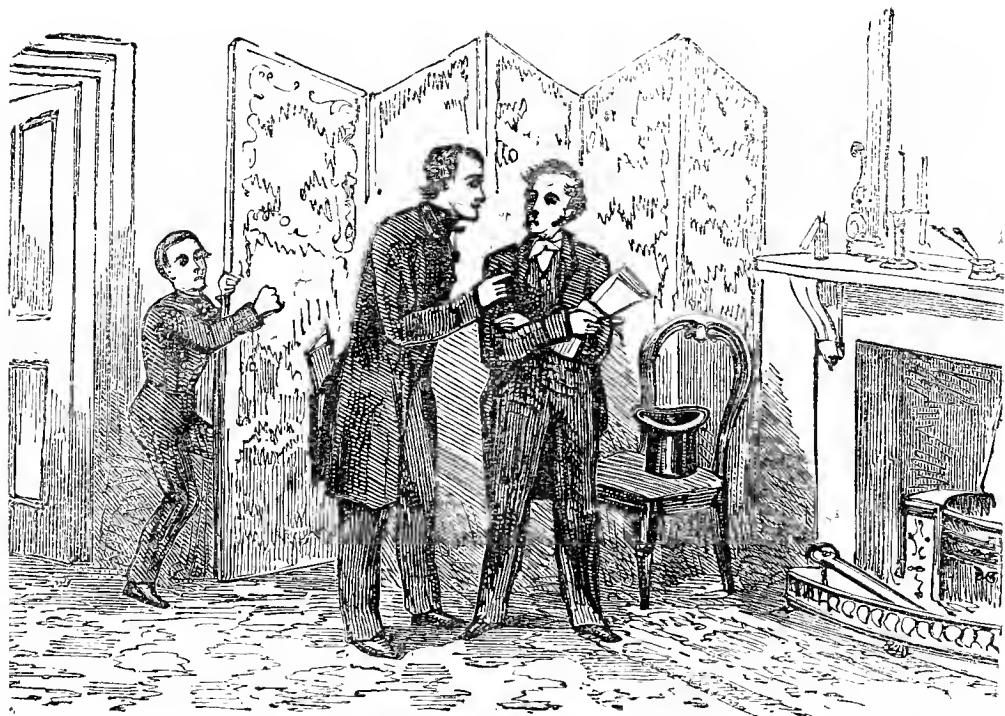
Jones. Serve you right, for nudging my elbow.

Robinson. I don't care for your chaff now. I've got the cup, and mean to keep it! (*Dances about.*)

Bang. Private Robinson, you are an honour to the corps: shake hands.

Tomkins. Shake hands with me, too; there's a good fellow. Though I'm only a recruit, I can respect the man who makes three points with one shot.

Bang. Squad, fall in! Attention! Right face. Quick march! [All march out, *Tomkins not in step.*



F E L I C I T Y

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OCTAVIUS TREPAN. *A surgeon young in years and practice.*

PETER PUMP (*his Buttons*). *An original; the genius of the surgery; and as such, the right boy in the right place.*

JOANNA O'GORMAN. *Presiding goddess in the culinary department in Dr. Trepan's very small household.*

MR. MERRITON—*A retired London merchant, a type of the real old English gentleman.*

CLARA MERRITON. *His orphan niece, an amiable and unaffected girl.*

ANTHONY CHARLOCK. *A nephew of Mr. Merriton, and a very unfair specimen of a man of business.*

MRS. CHARLOCK. *Anthony's wife, fond of dress and the aristocracy, without taste for the one or right to the other.*

MISS MATILDA CHARLOCK. *The only child of Anthony, and a true representative of her parents' predominant qualities.*

MR. MARMADUKE POUNCE. *An insipid attorney, and a devoted admirer of Miss Charlock.*

DRESSES.

Octavius Trepan. First Scene—a lounging coat. Second Scene—A gentleman's walking dress. Third Scene—A lounging suit. Fourth Scene—Ordinary suit; not full dress.

Peter Pump. Always the same—viz., in buttons.

Joanna. First Scene—Cotton dress, with sleeves turned up, checked apron, and servant's cap. Last scene—Dark alpaca dress, white apron, and cap trimmed with blue or pink ribbons.

Mr. Merriton. Plain ordinary dress of an elderly English gentleman.

Clara Merriton. Always simply and genteelly dressed according to the taste of the young lady taking the part.

Anthony Charlock. Dark coat buttoned up to the chin, no neckerchief showing.

Mrs. Charlock. First Scene—A gay morning dress with a smart cap, suggestive of soiled finery. Last Scene—Gay-coloured silk dress with flounces, no end of a cap, with a profusion of jewellery most vulgarly displayed.

Miss Matilda Charlock. First Scene—Morning dress, with a great exhibition of rings, bracelets, &c. Last Scene—Low dress, very smartly made, feathers, flowers, &c., to a great extent.

Mr. Marmaduke Pounce. Full suit of rusty black with white neckcloth.

Felicity.

ACT I. SCENE I. FEE.

An appearance of a surgery with a few bottles on shelves, pestle and mortar, &c. JOANNA and PETER discovered investigating the mysteries of science.

Joanna (Looking round contemptuously). Sure the more I look round at these nasty dirty little manes of living the more I feel that the three of us stand a better chance of being taught than fed !

Peter. (With indignation). That just shows how much you know about it ! Why the contents o' them there bottles is enough to pison more patients than ever was ill ! and there's things liere (*pointing to drawers*) as can settle every nerve in your body, and cure all your ailments before you've got 'em ! No ! the drugs is well enough ; what we wants is a practice—and I've got a scheme in my head for bringing of it in sooner than you may think for.

Joanna. Maybe, then, your schaming will succeed better than my own ; for see, now ! haven't I been at that squinting butcher boy for the last month, trying to persuade him to let the master have a little cut at them crooked eyes of his ? But the never a bit would he listen to me, till he towld me plump and plain this morning, that he'd wait and see my own nose put straight before any mortal thing should turn his eyes.

Peter. (Scornfully). Slashing at butcher boys ain't the kind of practice for us ! It's a few broken collar-bones, or "scussions" of the brain, or compound fractures of the legs, would set us *all* to rights !—make Master President of the Chi-co-rur-gical Society—me the jolliest chap you ever saw—and you, perhaps—Mrs. Peter Pump.

Joanna. (Putting her hands to head with bewilderment). My head's nearly gone from me listening to things that I hope never to see ! For where ye'll find the collar-bones, and the "compoundings" with the legs, and the "monstrosities" of the brain, puzzles mine entirely ; and for myself, I'm an

Felicity.

O'Gorman every inch of me, and it isn't to a pump I'll go for a better name.

Peter. What's in a name, Joanna? True, a pump's a pump! but when it's a surgical pump the case is different! Now, you listen to me, and hear what I'm a going to do, and then see if you wont be proud of me! Just at dusk this afternoon, I shall take a jolly big pail of water, and pour it down at the corner here in time for the easterly wind to form it into the profitablest bit of sliding any one with an eye to the "purfession" could wish to see; then (*rubbing his hands at the prospect*) up I turns the gas over the door high as it can go, and if you don't hear collar-bones a-rattling, and something like cheerful business coming in after that, you'll never be Missis Pump! (*JOANNA about to reply, the door bell rings, at which both hurriedly prepare to leave the surgery.* *PETER, giving JOANNA a push, says*)—That's 'im! and not very amiable, I shouldn't think, by the ring. You make haste and settle him with his dinner, and leave me to work up the practice.

[*Exit PETER.*

Joanna. (*Looking admiringly after him.*) That boy's got a power of good sense and "shi-entific" learning! han I'd be preferring him to my own cousin and ten butcher boys—but he's so taken up with the roguery and the physic that no likely "girrl" dare *pay* her addresses to him! Still, if by his schaming he brings good to the poor master, I'll not find fault wid "him," for not a dacent "faver" or a "masles" is there in the whole parish; and (*sighing*) I'm thinking we're just living upon two or three chilblains at the school there yonder, and the gout of that old Stokes at the "Chequers;" but, business or no business, he'll be starving for his dinner, and I must make all peaceable by the time that rogue of a Peter has worked-up the *bone* practise. [*Exit JOANNA.*

Curtain falls.—END OF ACT I. SCENE I.

Felicity.

ACT I. SCENE II.

A small room, moderately furnished, a few medical books, slippers, cigar cases, &c., strewn about. MR. OCTAVIUS TREPAN sitting cleaning a pipe-bowl, and soliloquising meanwhile.

Trepan. I should say it was a precious state of things, and such as I should like my beloved aunt Betsy to see, and judge for herself. "Nothing," said she, "like establishing yourself in a genteel, retired, suburb; for in time you get a substantial local connexion, and become everybody's medical man!" So I did; so I have! and so I am! I did establish myself in a *retired suburb*, so *gen-teel*, that everybody makes his own salts and senna! I *have got a substantial local connexion*, consisting of audaciously robust creditors, who are anything but patients! and I am *everybody's medical man*, precisely because I am nobody's! I am getting so confoundedly out of practice, too! hanged if I shall know the tooth-ache from the whooping-cough soon! It's a dead take in! for even the very soil turns out to be *gravelly*, when I had fondly built all my hopes upon clay. Yes, everything's against me; here's November! when unquestionably, as a national right, we ought to have fogs so thick that you could cut 'em—not a bit of it! a clear wholesome frost sets in! A fellow said to me just now, "Fine bracing weather this, sir!" hanged if I couldn't have knocked his teeth down his throat! (*Here a violent ringing at the surgery-bell is heard*). I'll have a galvanic battery fixed to that bell! (*rises in a rage*) I'll runaway ring 'em.

Enter PETER, speaking quickly, with an excited and pleased look.

Peter. All right, sir! there's a reg'lar haccident in the surgery!

Trepan. What do you mean, you idiot? What's all right?

Peter. (*Half mysteriously and hesitatingly*.) Why, sir,—

it's froze, sir! and they've been and fell down and hurt themselves on it, sir! and—you'd better make haste and go, sir! for there's sure to be more of 'em—because there's a coming of age at the Tibbles's, and—and—they must go round the corner to get to it.

Trepan. What is the ass raving about? Must go round the corner to come of age at the Tibbles's! Now, look here, Pump! I've been watching you for some time! You're either mad or imbecile, and if I don't clap a blister on the back of your neck to-night I shall be a scandal to the profession!

[*Exit TREPAN.*]

Peter. (*Stupidly feeling the back of his neck.*) Oh yes! a likely thing he's a-going to keep his hand in upon me! Blest, if I haven't just made that slide in the right time! and if I don't keep the game alive, I shall be as mad as he takes me for. (*Here a bell rings violently, PETER rubbing his hands and dancing with glee.*) Here they come! Now the last was a leg! shouldn't wonder if this was a "harm!"

[*Bell rings again, PETER goes to rush out, when JOANNA rushes in.*

Joanna. What'll we do now, Peter? Ye've done it finely, after all your "schaming!" Here's a lady in a carriage at the door, wanting to take the doctor back wid her to her uncle, who's in a fit of—"epsey-depsey!" and there's the master taken up wid mending a broken forrin image of a man, that's too poor I'll go bail ever to show the likes of us the colour of his money; and there's my own first cousin on the mat, with a shilling in the palm of his hand, and a screaming devil of a tooth to be drawn for it! And what'll I say? and—(*here affects to cry*) what'll I do? for my own first cousin,—the poor feller's crying like a child, and saying that only for me, he'd never have come here at all—Oh—oh! *uh!* (*Sobs.*)

Peter. Joanna, you're a making a stoopid of yourself! This is the sort of thing to put you in spirits! You go and

tell the lady that the doctor's got a surgical haccident on hand, but it'll soon be over, and then—if she'll oblige you by leaving her address—he'll come and set her uncle all to rights. And as to your first cousin, take him down in the kitchen, and keep him quiet till I've got time to punch his 'ed! (JOANNA *about to retort when several bells begin to ring, at which she puts her hands to her ears and rushes out*). Oh! this is getting to be too much of a good thing. Business is ~~all~~ very well; but I never meant that all Tibbles's party should go down on it at once (DR. TREPAN *is heard calling "Peter! Peter!" impatiently*, PETER *makes for the door*.) Yes! sir, coming sir! ain't this about a mess? that's all! I shan't stand it! I shall go and sit at the corner, and tell 'em not to go on it! or, better still! I'll turn the jolly gas out. [TREPAN *calls again, "Peter Pump! are you coming?"*]

PETER, *looking half wild, disappears.*

Enter DR. TREPAN and PETER, the former shaking PUMP by the collar, who is trying to make himself heard above the vociferous threats of his master.

Trepan. You shall be given up to justice, you outrageous rascal! you shall, you young vagabond! I'll show you no quarter! Mr. Tibbles declares that you were seen to pour the water down, with a fiendish intention that it should freeze.

Peter. Well! and what if I did? we've got some patients by it at last at all events!

Trepan. (Greatly annoyed.) Patients you call 'em! A link-boy with a sprained ankle, who cost me a bottle of lotion and a shilling's-worth of brandy! and a wretched organ-grinder with a grazed elbow, who wouldn't go away till I gave him five shillings to mend his organ, and fifteen-pence for lost time. And that's not the worst, you villain! for I believe I've lost a case where a *fee* of twenty guineas was certain. Ugh! (*giving PETER a shake*) hang

me if I couldn't strangle you! But, you dog, you shall go with me, and, by Jove! if this old gentleman has slipped through my fingers you shall suffer for it! I'll either take you to Colney Hatch or make a disgusting mummy of you.

[*Drags him out by the collar, shaking him.*
Curtain falls.—END OF ACT I.

ACT II. SCENE III.—LIE.

room in the house of MR. MERRITON. CLARA MERRITON, his niece, in anxious conversation with DR. TREPAN.

Clara. The servants told me that my uncle was in great danger, although my cousin assured me that the attack was nothing extraordinary. He would not allow me to enter the room, and said that to fetch a doctor was unnecessary. Feeling very uneasy and anxious, I came for you unknown to any one. Since my return, they will not let me see my dear uncle, excusing themselves by saying he is not to be disturbed, and that medical assistance is not required.

Trepan. Then, as a matter of course, my services are dispensed with; although, from your description of the symptoms, it would seem that immediate and powerful remedies should have been tried.

Clara. (*Sobbing.*) Oh! Dr. Trepan, I fear there must be something very wrong. I know that my uncle would rather have me with him than any one; and no one has any right to forbid me his room, for I have been his adopted child ever since my father's death, and was to leave school in three months to be his housekeeper and live always with him; but Anthony Charlock is so selfish and narrow-minded, and I'm sure has some reason for treating me so unkindly.

Trepan. Your fears may be ungrounded, my dear Miss Merriton. But pray tell me if this gentleman, of whom you seem to entertain such a poor opinion, is your uncle's son?

Clara. Oh no! his sister's son. He was always a troublesome boy, untruthful, and sometimes unjust. Soon after he

came from school he married the daughter of a wealthy tallow-melter, who thinks of nothing but wearing fine clothes and giving grand parties. Their only child, Matilda, is just like her mother—and oh! (*sobbing*)—if anything should happen to dear uncle they say I shall have to go and live with them. But I *cannot!*—I will *not!*

Trepan. Dear me! How pleased I should be if I could see any way of relieving your mind, Miss Merriton. However, I'll just return and see to a few surgical cases that I expect are waiting for me, and, in the meantime, my *Pump* is at your service, and—

Clara. (*Interrupting.*) Oh, doctor! I fear that you mistake the illness altogether. I believe that the stomach is not in the slightest degree affected, and—

Trepan. Pardon me, Miss Merriton; it's my *boy* who rejoices in the name of Peter *Pump*, and I propose leaving *him* here in case you might require to despatch a messenger for me later in the evening.

Clara. Thanks!—a thousand thanks! Then I'll request him to be in attendance in this room that he may be ready to despatch at a minute's notice! He can sit behind this screen that his appearance may not excite observation—for Anthony Charlock is so tenacious of seeing strangers about.

Trepan. Do precisely that which will be most agreeable to yourself in every way, and remember, Miss Merriton, that I hold myself in readiness to obey your commands at any hour. Good evening! (*Shaking her hand.*)

Clara. Good evening, doctor. I thank you again and again.

Curtain falls.

ACT II. SCENE IV

Scene as before, in MR. MERRITON's house, PETER peeping from behind the screen.

Peter. Well! I wish this old chap would make haste and get worse, or something, for I'm getting jolly tired, and rather anxious about the “purfession” at home! Of course

the sliding practice is all fell off by this time ; 'cos it's thawing, fast as it can thaw. I ain't easy in my mind, somehow ; I want to see what Joanna's doing. Ah ! there's that cousin of hers. I'll—— Hallo ! here's a little game, (*Conceals himself behind the screen as two persons appear from Mr MERRITON's room, earnestly conversing.*)

Anthony Charlock. Yes, Mr. Pounce ! I will now send for a medical man. He can do no more for me, and I must do what I can for him ; there may be a chance of his recovery.

Pounce. Just so ! Nothing more, as you say, can be done for you—and your uncle's condition is, I fear, precarious. We have certainly been very fortunate in getting his consent to this arrangement in your favour ; and as you will no doubt fulfil his wishes in taking a fatherly care of Miss Clara, the *little evasion* that you have made will be, *morally*, of no moment ; and, *legally*, you are secure.

Anthony. (*Thoughtfully.*) Yes ! It was but a *little* evasion after all ; though some over-particular people might call it a “*lie*.”

Pounce. Just so !

Anthony. Well ! I see no harm in what I have done. I certainly stand in greater need of the money—owing to my position in business—than a girl who has no one to think of or provide for but herself. I have promised to make a home for her in the bosom of my own family, and, if she can agree with Mrs. Charlock and Matilda, her happiness will be greater than mine, that's certain.

Pounce. Just so ! Your uncle seems to have been very fond of her. I'm surprised he had not made his will long ago. Very opportune that you should be here to direct him as to the most prudent disposition of his property. A pity that she should be of such an improvident turn. Quite as well that you evaded his inquiry as to her arrival by a—by a—a negative reply.

Anthony. Not a doubt of it ! As her presence would have done *him* no good, and *me* a great deal of harm, I made n

scruple in saying that she had *not* come, and I feared *might not*, as there had been some mistake in the message sent to her.

Pounce. Ah! just so! Well, sir, we must hope that your stratagem will ultimately benefit her more than Mr. Meriton's mistaken generosity could have done.

Anthony. Oh! she'll be all right! I don't mind him seeing her now, because's he's too weak to ask any questions; and as the time has arrived for a medical man, she may as well send for that young scamp of a Trepan, who, I believe, is little better than a quack! (*Here PETER, round the screen, shakes his fist at the back of ANTHONY's head, and performs a series of most extraordinary gestures.*)

Pounce. Just so! as I think there is nothing more to consult upon, I shall wish you good evening, Mr. Charlock, and hope to see you at my office the day after to-morrow, when I shall be prepared to consign the papers to you. (*PETER reaches round the screen with an apparent effort to snatch the papers out of his hand.*)

Anthony. I shall be with you, depend upon it. For, although off to Manchester by the mail train to-night, I shall return to-morrow—principally to conclude this business—for I fear that this illness of my uncle's may terminate fatally! eh? (*looking anxiously in the lawyer's face.*)

Pounce. Just so! still, "while there's life, there's hope!" and I've known men recover from worse attacks.

Anthony. (*Heaving a deep sigh of uncontrollable disappointment.*) Yes! I must return to-morrow, come what will!

[POUNCE and CHARLOCK walk off together.

Peter. (*Stepping from behind screen and looking cautiously after them.*) Well, I'm blowed! if this isn't as neat a little plot as ever was made, and as likely to be upset as anything I ever knew. Poor old gentleman! it don't want a medical opinion to observe that your dutiful nephew wont hang or pison hisself if you don't get better: or that he wont give a housewarming if you do! He wouldn't be over-nice in wishing me somewhere else if he'd known my position when he spoke

of that "little evasion." Mr. An-to-ny, you've given yourself a *leetle* too much rope this time ; but I've got one end of it, and it'll be a pity if I don't keep you a-dancing at the other to the tune of a "little evasion," till you'll only be too glad to cut it. Lor ! how a *man* may rise to importance all of a minute ! Two hours ago, and a slide was the only secret I had to bless myself with : and now I've got one that beats that all to fits, yet I can't even tell Joanna of it in the most confidential confidence, for fear of that beast of a cousin.

Enter CLARA and touches PETER on the shoulder.

Peter. (*With a startled manner.*) Not your's, miss ! Joanna's I was a speaking about.

Clara. (*Vacantly.*) What Joanna's ?

Peter. Joanna's beast of a cousin, miss ! not yours.

Clara. (*Impatiently.*) Oh ! take no heed of cousins, but go immediately with this note to your master, and tell him that I shall be watching my uncle most anxiously till he is under medical treatment.

Peter. Depend upon it, miss, that my master will so "transact" upon him, that he'll soon bring him about again. In such a case as this, he wont stick at trifles ! if "infernal" remedies don't do, he'll try "exfernals" ones ; perhaps cover him all over with blisters (*'specially on the back of his neck*) till he's one "mast" of "information," then pour the physic in at such a rate that even his great-grandmother wont know him when he gets better.

Clara. (*After listening with some degree of surprise and horror, cannot forbear laughing at the conclusion of the speech.*) Really, Peter, if the remedies are to be as active as you describe, I am sure that we may all depend upon Dr. Trepan's skill in medicine, for he will certainly make up for the time that I've lost in my uncle's case.

Peter. All right, miss ! I'm off like a shot. Keep up your spirits, and don't you be gammoned into leaving your uncle's room till we come back ; and if that clever cousin of yours comes to interfere, tell him that a Pump earnestly recom-

mends him to make an “*ewasive*” exit into the middle of next week.

[*Exit PETER PUMP.*]

Clara. What an original that boy is, to be sure ! and how devoted to his master’s interest ! And certainly Dr. Trepan is very clever, and *I’ve great faith* in him. By the way, how could this Pump know anything of Anthony ? and evidently of his character, too ! Ah ! perhaps some good spirit has sent this half-witted boy in my way to caution me, and I’ll adhere to his advice, and not be induced to leave my uncle’s bedside ; for I too well know that he is my best and only friend.

Curtain falls.—END OF ACT II.

ACT III. SCENE V.—CITY.

A showily-furnished room in the house of MR. ANTHONY CHARLOCK. Mrs. CHARLOCK sitting reading the “Times.”

Enter Miss MATILDA CHARLOCK.

Mrs. C. Well I never ! why, Matilda, here’s the Scaggs’s advertising their house to be let for the summer ! don’t that show what a pretty state *his* affairs must be in ? Your pa said they were agoing to pieces long ago ; and he had a great mind to buy him up.

Matilda. I don’t see that the house-letting has anything at all to do with it. Why, the Frimleys’ daily governess told me that Lord Pettypeer was going to do the same (and you know she teaches the young Pettypeers) for he expects to make heaps of money by it during the Exhibition.

Mrs. C. Lor, does he ? Well I wish your pa would take it for us ; it’s just the part of town I should like to bring you out in. And as when poor old Merriton’s gone we shall have to offer Clara a home, she might just as well be left to look after the place here ; for I expect when we do launch out in our proper sphere I shall have my hands full.

Matilda. (Affectedly.) Oh dear me ! I almost dread it, for

I'm sure an aristocratic life must be very trying, particularly in the season ; and we had certainly better begin at once to accustom ourselves to the style of life, or we *shall* feel awkward when the time comes.

Mrs. C. Of course we must ; although I put your pa in a regular way, yesterday, because I proposed an "At home" once a week to him. He flew in such a passion, and, as usual, wanted to know the cost. But when I assured him that all we had to do was to send out invitations to two hundred more than the house would hold, light up the rooms, and leave all that came to cram themselves in a given time in as small a space as possible, and then drag their way out as they best could, he sobered down, and said—"Then be as fashionable as you like, for it seems to be more inconvenient to the guest than expensive to the host—consequently, it won't hurt me."

Matilda. Oh ! that's all right ! Well then, ma, when shall we fix for the first "At home" ? and whom shall we ask ?

Mrs. C. Two questions I'm puzzled to answer. It's so very provoking, this illness of old Merriton coming just now ! He may die to-morrow, or linger for a month ; and he's so well known and liked in the City, that if we were to fix a time at a venture, and send out invitations, we couldn't calculate on any of the merchants ! they'd be sure to say your pa was slighting his uncle, and I don't believe one of them would come.

Matilda. (*Indignantly.*) Parcel of rubbish ! Then I'm sure they may stay away, for we can very soon get a really stylish circle about us without a paltry merchant in it ! I wish you'd leave it to me, ma ; and say it shall be this day fortnight, and I'll let you see what a sensation party I can get up.

Mrs. C. I don't mind leaving it entirely in your hands. But be sure you ask the Blinkingtons, and upon no account forget the Foodles,—because they are very highly connected. Indeed Ernest, Foodle's wife's brother-in-law, holds an appointment in almost the Royal household ; and as I hope to

see you presented some day, I think it as well that we should secure friends as near the Court as possible.

Matilda. Lor, ma, I don't think so much of the Foodles. But when my list is made you shall see it, and I know that you'll approve of it (*here, counting with her fingers*). The whole of the Blinkingtons must come, of course; and their cousin the Honorable Ginger Middlemist; and then the Fitz-Vernon Trails; and Lady Amphibula Grimes, and all her set. Lor! we shall soon make up the number; and I'll see at last if it isn't possible to have a decent party without hearing in every corner of the room that everlasting "business is business!" Ugh! I hate the very sound of it!

Mrs. C. That's just what I'm always telling your pa! we're not fit to mix with these City money-grubbers! I can't abide them. They're only fit, like old Merriton, to make money for high-minded people to spend. What's the time, Matilda?

Matilda. (*Looking at her watch.*) Just ten.

Mrs. C. Dear! dear! At half-past I'm expecting that clergyman's wife for cook's character, and here I'm not dressed. I must go and put on my moire antique, for these people think nothing of you unless you make an appearance.

[*Rising to leave the room.*

Matilda. You look very well, ma! I'm sure I wouldn't put myself out of the way, for she's only a curate's wife.

Mrs. C. Well, if I do nothing else I must just put on my rings and chain, or I might as well be a nobody.

[*Exit Mrs. CHARLOCK.*

Matilda. Now, I wonder if I dare ask Marmaduke Pounce o our "at home?" No! I think not; because he does hang bout one so, and might just stick himself in the way of some ore distinguished admirer; and I confess I'd rather be Lady hat's-your-name on five farthings a-year than Mrs. Marmaduke Pounce with the ground-rent of Cheapside and Cornhill for my pin-money.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. Here's a boy come from Mr. Merriton's, with a message for your pa, miss.

Matilda. You know as well as I do that pa's gone to Manchester, and no doubt settled everything with Merriton before he left. Ask the boy to give you the message.

Servant. I have, miss! and he's *so* imperent. He says he "ain't a going to do nothing o' the sort," and he "will see one of the members of the family, or he'll know why!"

Matilda. What atrocious impertinence! Show him in, then.

(*Exit Servant.*) This is some of that Clara's doings. I'll take care that she suffers for this!

Enter PETER.

Peter. Good morning, miss! You're Miss Charlock, I'll wager! How wonderfully like your father—him to a T! Certainly, *he'll* never be dead while you're alive! Lor how fond you must be of one another—surely!

Matilda. You're very insolent, and unless you deliver your message immediately I shall order you from the house.

Peter. I beg your pardon, miss. Who'd have thought you'd be so vexed at being told you was like your father? I know I thought I was paying of you a compliment. (Miss MATILDA looks highly indignant.) Well, miss, here's something as'll please you. Miss Clara Merriton sends her remembrances, and her dear uncle's much better, *pro-nounced* out of all danger, and she hopes her father and you, and all the family, will feel as well to-day as you did yesterday. (MATILDA looks uncomfortable, puts her handkerchief to her face, and rings the bell violently.)

Peter. (With affected astonishment—aside.) Well, I'm blest! Anybody would think that she had been up to a little evasion!—Don't be overcome, miss, I beg on you! This joyful news seems to shock you, as it will your poor father, no doubt; but you must break it to him by degrees, and tell

him that we're all indebted to "a fellow little better than a quack" for his uncle's recovery, not forgetting that blessed angel, Miss Clara, and her affectionate nursing! The dear old gentleman doesn't know how to make enough of her. (*Here MATILDA affects to be in violent hysterics at the moment MRS. CHARLOCK and servants appear in answer to the bell.*)

Peter. (*To MRS. CHARLOCK.*) Poor creetur! this news about Mr. Merriton has overcome her fine feelings.

Mrs. C. (*Assuming an air of sudden grief.*) Oh! then, he's gone!

Peter. (*Hypocritically.*) No, mum. The doctor says he'd better not attempt it till after Christmas, and then he must go to Devonshire.

Mrs. C. (*Looking half wild, and rushing to chase MATILDA's hands.*) There! there! my good boy, that will do; we wish to be alone to congratulate each other.

Peter. Certainly, mum!—certainly! (*Aside.*)—And a werry sweet pair you are to count among a rich old gentleman's well-wishers.

[*Exit PETER.*

Curtain falls on MATILDA still in hysterics, MRS. C. and servants trying to pacify her.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV SCENE VI.—FELICITY.

A room at DR. TREPAN'S, arranged with greater order and comfort than before, the DOCTOR seated before the fire, smoking and soliloquizing.

Trepan. (*Taking out his watch.*) Hem! five! Ah, I promised to be at the Merritons' by seven, and I shall, too; for I wouldn't miss spending this evening there on any account. After the good old gentleman's warm invitation I should be a "guff" to stay away. And then his niece, too—there! dash it all, if I allow myself to think of her I shall soon forget everything else: still, I've a *greater* right to think of her

now I have a few shillings to call my own. Dear old Aunt Betsy, thanks to you, practice or no practice, I can now look straight at my butcher and baker, and pass my tailor patronizingly, and even allow myself to dream sometimes of one of the best women upon earth! That good old lady's money brought with it the blessings of prosperity in every way. What a night that was to—be—sure, when I was fetched to Mr. Merriton! Ah! it was Pump's ingenious slide that brought *that* luck, so it was! for if I hadn't been detained by that dirty organ-grinder I should have been out, sure as a gun, and then might never have known Clara. Lor! what a fool I am! Most likely the acquaintance is a matter of utter indifference to her. Nevertheless that scheming rascal Pump deserves my gratitude; and as I never, upon principle, check a good impulse, I'll ring for him and stun him with a Christmas-box. (*Rings.*) I feel brimful of acknowledgments to-night, and if I don't mind shall become agreeable. (*Hums* “For there's nothing half so sweet in life as love's young dream.” *Enter Pump.*) Pump! you rascal! I rung for you to give you something!

Peter. You're werry good, sir! and that's werry singular! For Joanna made the same remark when you rung. “There,” said she, “make haste, for I know the master's going to give you a Christmas-box.”

Doctor. You don't say so! Perhaps she told you what.

Peter Well, sir, I should hope not, exactly; for when I was half-way up the stairs she calls after me—“Mind it isn't a blister for the back of your neck, Peter.”

Doctor 'Pon my word, Pump, that was a waggish remark of Joanna's! Is she always as jocose?

Peter. Pretty well, sir; but to-night she's over and above, because Miss Clara has “asted” her and me to go and spend Christmas-eve there, saying as how you was a going, and that Mr. Merriton feels so grateful to you and all your family, that he wishes to make us all specially happy to-night.

Doctor. (Laughing.) Really, I'm very much obliged to Mr. Merriton, and make no doubt that he'll succeed; particularly in your case, for instance, if Joanna's to be one of the company.

Peter. True, sir! Joanna's is excellent company, and that's why I likes keeping it! leastways, *she's* keeping *mine*, because she says I don't know how to turn it to such good advantage as she does.

Doctor. Now, that's eandid, Pump! and I admire you for it; but how about that cousin of Joanna's?

Peter. O we throwed him over long ago. Quite circumwented him—like somebody else's cousin that I could name.

Doctor. (Smiling.) Yes! yes! I know to whom you allude! You mean Mr. Anthony Charllock! Ah! I should think that he was not likely to be one of the festive ones to-night. He's been dangerously ill, I understand, through that accident he met with on the Manchester line.

Peter. Dreadful bad, sir; at the point of death. And when he thought he was going he sent for his uncle, and confessed all about that "little evasion," so the old gent forgave him, and made him a present of a good round sum, to go, for the good of everybody's health, to Australia; so he sold his business, and sails on New Year's Day. Now he's just the man for anyone in the bush to take a fancy to. If I was there I should get too fond of him; I couldn't bear him out of my sight.

Doctor. (Ironically.) Ah! you're too affectionate by half, Pump; but here's something for your fidelity to me (*handing money from his pocket*). Tell Joanna, as I shall see her later in the evening, I'll give her a token of my regard then.

Peter. (With excitement, looking at the money.) Lor, sir! your goodness is just what Joanna and me has always fixed our future hopes on! We've said from the first, "Wait till he gets in practice, and he'll be for ever remembering of us."

Doctor. (Aside.) A. cool calculation, I must say! Well,

Pump, you may go now, just put my things ready, and betake yourselves to Mr. Merriton's as soon as you like.

Peter. Thank you, sir, thank you! (*aside to audience*) Lor! how jolly comfortable one *man* can make another if he likes! Doctors is true gentlemen, and I'm proud of our "purfession."

[*Exit Pump.*]

Doctor. Poor Pump! quite an original! (*Looks at his watch.*) Time I made my preparations for departure! (*Surgery bell rings.*) There! something to detain me, of course.

Enter Peter.

Peter. Please, sir, Mrs. Tetherby's sent to know if you think solids will hurt her?

Doctor. Certainly not, if Mrs. Tetherby takes them in moderation. [*Exit Peter.*] What an idiot she is, to be sure!

Enter Peter.

Peter. Please, sir, Mrs. Tetherby also wishes to know if she may partake of the family dinner to-morrow?

Doctor. (*Petulantly.*) Tell Mrs. Tetherby that she's at liberty to eat anything that comes on the table *but* the *dish-covers*, which I *do* consider indigestible! [*Exit Peter.*] Hang Mrs. Tetherby! the woman had a cold in her head a month ago—got well in twenty-four hours—eats like an alderman—and persists in sending here continually to know what she's "to eat, drink, and avoid." By Jove, if I don't make my exit, I shall perhaps be required to stay here to deliver a lecture on gastronomy.

[*Rushes off.*]

Curtain falls.—END OF SCENE VI.

SCENE VII.—*A drawing-room in Mr. MERRITON's house, looking very festive, and decorated with evergreens. Mr. MERRITON seated in an arm-chair. CLARA on a low seat by his side, knitting.*

Mr. M. Well, Clara, we are still alone. I wonder the

Felicity.

doctor hasn't made his appearance yet. I should wish him to be here before the others arrive ; for, although I am almost myself again, I'm not quite the thing yet.

Clara. (Bending over her work.) He is most likely engaged



with patients, or he certainly would have been here long since ; his practice has extended very much since his attendance on you, dear uncle.

Mr. M. Delighted to hear it, my dear ; he deserves to get on, and if any one should assist him I ought to be that person. I value him for his services as a doctor, and respect him for his goodness as a man ; and I hope, my child, that you'll always treat him with courtesy for my sake.

Clara. My dear uncle, I should forfeit all claim to your fatherly consideration and his—his—attention—attendance (I mean), if I were to forget for an instant all that he has done for me in restoring your he—

Mr. M. (Jocosely.) There, don't look so confused, you minx; I don't mind acknowledging the smart young doctor's attention, and why should you? Every one he's attentive to isn't obliged to be a patient, eh, Clary? What say you?

Clara. (Vaguely.) Patient? Yes, uncle; no, I mean.

Mr. M. (Playfully mocking her.) Patient? Yes, uncle no, I mean. Now, I'll tell you what it is, Miss Clara: you're an impostor, and if I shut myself up here alone with you I shall soon become as bad; so I've a great mind to ask this young inspector of woes and maladies to come and locate here, and I'll allow him to do as he likes, if he'll keep me in health and temper and you in subjection. Now, what do you say to that little arrangement, young lady? Surely you won't object! If you do, you're a greater impostor than I took you for.

Clara. (Rising and playfully shaking her Uncle by the shoulders.) No, I'm not an impostor; and I don't object. But—there I wish you wouldn't, Uncle! (A knock is heard at the street-door.) Ah! there's a knock, that's—

Mr. M. (Interrupting.) "Him!" you were going to say, but I believe your guess is as bad as your grammar. There, go along, miss, and see if the servants have got all the ingredients for their spice-pot, for it strikes me very forcibly that by-and-by your little mind will be far away from the requirements of these poor things in the kitchen. (Exit CLARA looking very confused as well as amused.) Ah! ah! Miss Clara, I've confirmed my suspicions, and if the Doctor isn't over head and ears in love with you, he's got no taste and a very small amount of heart, that's all I know; but I'm pretty well sure he's not deficient in either; therefore I think you're both about to reach the summit of your wishes. (Servant announces MR. CHARLOCK, Mr. M. rising to meet him.) Well, Anthony, my boy! I'm glad that you've come, for this is a night when everybody should be pleased to see everybody, and members of families should make a point of meet-

ing to say kind things to each other. But where's the wife? and Matilda? Coming, of course?

Charlock. Thank you, uncle—you're too good! they'll be here shortly. Mrs. C. stayed behind just to give a finishing touch to the dress—you know she has a little weakness that way.

Mr. M. Well, Anthony, it's an amiable weakness, and one that I can forgive every woman for, as it's mostly indulged in for our gratification.

Charlock. Then I'm sure *I* ought to be a very happy man, if all the finery I see at home is intended to please *me*.

Mr. M. So I trust you are, my boy; and if there's anything wanting to make you more so, don't hesitate to give me an opportunity of serving you.

Charlock. You have already done too much for me, Uncle Merriton, and if I had felt your good influence ten years ago as I feel it now, my course would have been—

Mr. M. (Kindly and impatiently.) There, there! let bygones be bygones; far better to see wrong turn right, than right turn wrong—no fear of a change afterwards! See that? ch? You've a better chance than ever your poor old uncle had of serving your fellow-man by example as well as precept. Where you're going, the opportunity's a grand one for yourself, and those you come across—for when the mind has become a little irregular, nothing sets it all to rights like a frequent exercise of conscience, and you'll have plenty of it there, I can tell you!

Enter MRS. CHARLOCK and MATILDA.

Ah! now, this is something! Welcome, my dears, welcome! Tell you what, Anthony, if they do dress, it's to the purpose; and, you may be jealous if you like, I take this as a compliment to me.

Mrs. C. Really, Uncle Merriton, you must be joking; for

we never thought of dressing, supposing it to be quite a family party.

Matilda. Yes, really, uncle, you must excuse us ; for we've got all our best dresses packed.

Mr. M. Indeed, my dear ; then I should recommend you to keep them so, for there can be very little occasion for them if these are your worst ; but (*ringing the bell*) where's Clara ? Surely she's not dressing.

Enter PUMP.

Peter. Please, sir, all the servants is so busy preparing the supper, that they sent me to say, "What did you please to want sir?"

Mr. M. Well—I please to want nothing just now, but Miss Clara and your master.

Peter. Oh ! I know where *they* are, sir ; they're a-decorating the room where you're a-going to dance with holly and mistletoe, and Joanna and me's been a-helping.

Mr. M. Oh, oh ! That's it, is it ? Well, you give my love to them, Mr. Pump, and tell them, if there's anything like true *felicity* I always wish to join in it. So I hope they'll oblige me by a little of their mode of decorating *here* ; and I say, Mr. Peter, perhaps you and Miss Joanna will be kind enough to continue to assist in the operations, for there can't be too many to help at a good thing.

Enter CLARA and DR. TREPAN, looking rather sheepish, JOANNA and PETER following, each with a bundle of evergreens.

Mr. M. Well, truants, what have you got to say for yourselves ?

Doctor. My dear sir, that I believe I am the happiest man in Christendom.

Clara. And I shall be as happy, dear uncle, if you'll say that Octavius may live with us.

Felicity.

Mr. M. Why ! didn't I say so, you hussy, an hour ago ? and now you want to pretend it was your idea ! She's a dissembling little puss, doctor. But much as I love truth, I wouldn't have her different for all the world ! and as I think she wants stricter looking after, and I'm growing a silly old man, you'd better come and help me to spoil her. (CLARA *kisses her uncle*, the DOCTOR *shakes his hand*.)

Doctor. Mr. Merriton, every fond wish I have ever entertained is fulfilled in this *one* ; and I trust that all assembled here may have reason to retain as grateful a remembrance of this Christmas Eve as I shall.

Charlock. I can only say, for my part, that for the first time in my life I have discovered that to be the dispenser of happiness to those around us is as great an enjoyment as to be a partaker.

Joanna. (*Aside, to Peter.*) Then all the harm I wish *him* is, some day *he* may turn out to be *both* ; and "it's a long lane that has no turning."

Peter. Be quiet, Joanna ; he *has* turned, which he never would have done only for that "little evasion ;" so you see there's good in everything, Joanna ; look at me !

Joanna. I do, and I see *nothing*.

Mrs. C. Really, Uncle Merriton, it's wonderful to see what a knack you have of making everybody comfortable, and considering that you've always kept out of fashionable society.

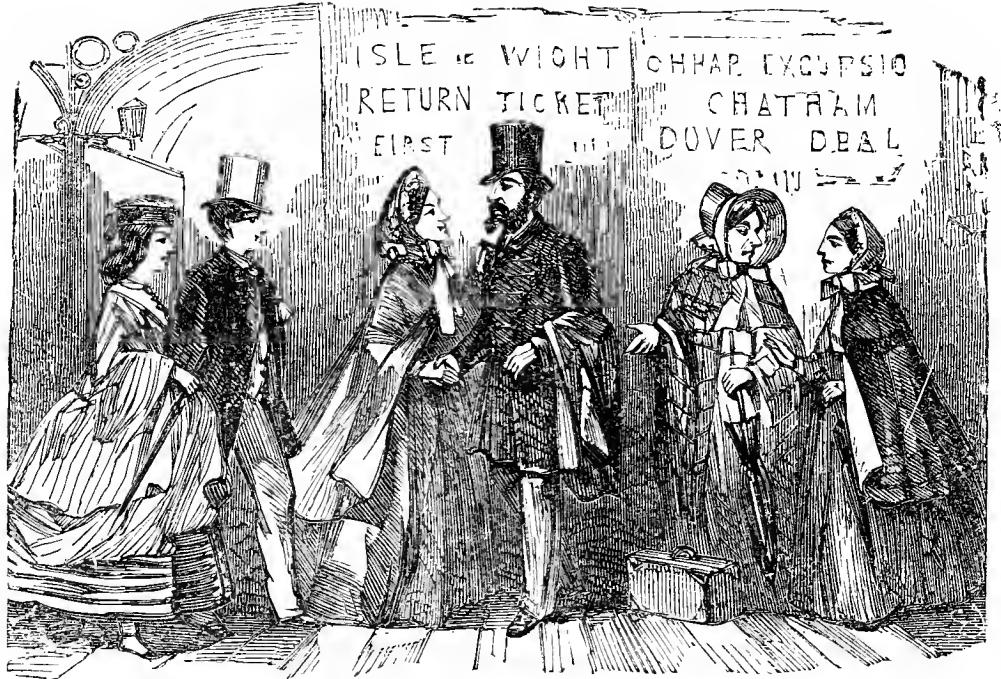
Mr. M. (*Impatiently.*) Stop ! stop, my dear ! that's just the very reason. They don't know anything about comfort in fashionable society ; they are too much taken up with astonishing each other. Now, *I* never *did* astonish anybody, and never expect to.

Matilda. Oh, uncle ! how can you say so ? Your goodness has astonished us all ; even Marmaduke says it's surprising.

Mr. M. Well, well, my child ; you mean *that* for a compliment, but it *isn't* one ; seeing that only *novelties* are sur-

prising. And, speaking of Mr. Marmaduke Pounce, reminds me of his apology for not being with us at present—business detains him ; but he will be here in time for supper, and the dance afterwards ; but as *I* intend to have one before, Matilda, *you* must put up with *me* for a partner till you are better provided (*here JOANNA displays by her feet a restless desire to begin*), and I see that Joanna there, and Mr. Pump, are impatient to distinguish themselves, I propose that we all pair off at once, that our great desire to please everybody *may* be fulfilled.

[Here each couple bow to each other, then to the audience, pair off, and retire. Curtain falls, dance-music being heard in the distance.



LOVE-CHASE.

FIRST SYLLABLE.—LOVE.

COLONEL HOWITZER. *An irascible elderly gentleman.*

MRS. DEBONNAIRE. *Applicant for a situation as housekeeper.*

MRS. MACARTHY. *The colonel's cook.*

SABRINA. *Waiting-maid.*

COSTUMES.—Quite ordinary; dressing-gown and slippers for colonel; very plain dresses for the domestics; a plain walking costume for *Mrs. Debonnaire*.

SCENE I.—*A breakfast-table partly laid, COLONEL HOWITZER seated thereat, looking stern and dignified, takes out his watch and exclaims—*

Colonel. Hem! This is what my friends call going into

regular housekeeping. Three minutes and a half past nine, and not a sound of a woman or a sign of breakfast! and this to a man who till now had only to look, be understood, and be served at one and the same instant! Confound the e women! since I've enlisted them I can get nothing done, and have to listen to more chatter and contradiction in one hour than poor TOM BROOKS dared to dream of in the whole twenty years he was with me. Bother the women! I say again. I'll soon break up the camp if these are their tactics; but they must take *care*, for I've advertised for a companionable person of firmness and principle to take the command, and if my plan succeed, I'll forswear the plagues altogether! (*Goes to window while speaking, and in a rage exclaims—*) Oh! oh! this accounts for my being kept in a state of starvation! There's that individual, called Sabrina, laughing with the milkman, and my cook, Mrs. Macarthy, coolly looking on! (*Ringing the bell violently.*) Now I'll have an explanation!

Enter SABRINA.

Sabrina (Coolly.) Did you ring, sir?

Col. Ring? why of course I did!

Sab (Still indifferently.) What did you please to want, sir?

Col. (Exasperated.) My breakfast! Are you aware that I ordered that meal at nine, and now it's a quarter past?

Sab. (Still at her ease.) Well, sir! you can't have it before it's ready and that wont be just yet.

Col. (In a deliberate rage.) BRING—UP—MY—COFFEE, instantly! and leave the service this day month for your impertinence and want of punctuality.

Sab. Oh, werry well, sir! (*And about to leave the room.*) But lor, you needn't be in such a passion about it! (*Suddenly seems to remember something, and after fumbling in her pocket, produces a letter, which she hands to the Colonel, saying—*) Oh, sir, here's a letter for you! it come when you was at dinner yesterday, but as it wouldn't do to disturb you *then*,

and I forgot it when I brought up the tea, Mrs. Macarthy said it would do at breakfast-time just as well.

Col. (Emphatically.) A letter which above all others should have been brought to me at once! This amounts to mutiny! Send Mrs. Macarthy to me.

Sab. Now directly, sir, or when she's disengaged?

Col. Instantly!

Sab. Please, sir, she's got a friend with her, and directly he's gone I'll——

Col. (Roars.) Tell Mrs. Macarthy to come here!

[*Exit SABRINA, flouting.*

(COLONEL opens letter and reads aloud.)

"*Impromptu*, in reply to advertisement of *Instanter*, desires to know immediately the exact amount of salary given, precise duties required, and the day and hour correctly stated when the advertiser may be seen. Address, Post Office, Cannonade Walk, Barnsbury."

'Pon my life! that's something like a letter! where's the *woman*, I should like to know, who could write such a sensible answer as that to an advertisement? Oh, I'll answer this at once. (*Sits down and writes.*)

"*Instanter* will be at home from three to four P.M. to-morrow, and within that hour will expect *Impromptu*. *Instanter* cannot enter into particulars by letter."

There! that's quite a relief to my mind!

Enter MRS. MACARTHY.

Mrs. Macarthy. Sabrina tells me you sent for me, sir?

Col. I did, Mrs. Macarthy; are you prepared to explain the causes of this irregularity and want of attention to my commands?

Mrs. Mac. Prepared is it, sir? And how would I be prepared, when I see no want of attention?

Col. (Waving his hand impatiently.) Fewer words, my good woman only just look a little more after that girl, Sabrina, and see that she does her duty better!

Mrs. Mac. Faith, sir, Sabrina has already so many *looking* after her, that I'd be only bothering the creature by *my* "interference."

Col. I quite agree with you, Mrs. Macarthy; she has too many followers by half, and I'm inclined to think that you are disposed to favour her.

Mrs. Mac. Sure, Colonel "How-is-it-sir," and that's the honest truth, and you'd have more thought for the "*girrl*" if you'd been decently brought up *yoursel'*; but 'stead o' that, you've been all your life accustomed to be waited on by dirty "*gossoons*" and blood-*thirrsty* souldgers, and you've no idea at all how *tinder* famales should be treated.

Col. Pshaw! One well-disciplined man is worth a whole regiment of you; but I sent for you, Mrs. Macarthy, to remind you of *your* duty, and not to tell me how to perform mine.

Mrs. Mac. See, now! you're not a bit imprised with the weakness of my sex! Ah, as my dear Dinnis used to say in the ould courting days (when I'd be casting a pleasant look at the boys in Limerick garrison)—"Ah, Bridget! them members of the '*milinterry*' *persuasion* have no love or truth in them at all! for their hearts are so hard and cowld, that if their heads were made of the same material, it's few of them 'ud be broke in the wars." And Dinnis, darling, you wur right.

Col. Now, Mrs. Macarthy, no more of this! If you don't know how to conduct things differently here, you'd better leave, for I *must* and *will* have implicit obedience.

Mrs. Mac. 'Deed, then, Colonel Howisitsir, as that same "explicit" obedience is what I never could bring my mind to, I'll take my lave of you; but I'll keep my eye upon you, sir, for something tells me that before long I'll see *you* changed by that "touch of nature that makes the whole world kind."

[*Exit* MRS. MACARTHY.]

Col. Well! if this isn't being surrounded by the enemy I

don't know what it is! That Hibernian torment meant her quotation to be significant, no doubt; but what *did* it *signify*? However, I feel that relief's at hand; and to be more sure of it, I'll not trust either of them with this letter, but post it myself, and *congratulate* myself that it's *not* to a woman.

[*Exit COLONEL.*]

SCENE II.

Enter MRS. MACARTHY and MRS. DEBONNAIRE.

Mrs. Mac. (*Placing a chair.*) Will you please to take a sate, ma'am, and I'll tell the *Colonel* you wish to spake wid him.

Mrs. Debonnaire. (*Starting.*) Colonel! I thought the head of this establishment was a *lady*!

Mrs. Mac. A lady is it? 'Deed no! but a rale "milinterry" Colonel, and one of great larning and—"ferocity."

Mrs. D. (*With an alarmed manner.*) Thank you! I think I'll not wait. I'll not trouble you to tell the gentleman.

Mrs. Mac. Oh! you'll stay if you plase, ma'am, or *he'll* be saying it's not "dishiplin," and I'll lose my *character* as well as my place! (*Going out, says significantly aside*) Faith, I think my prophecy will soon be fulfilled, and it's that "*won*" will be the means of putting my Colonel on a par wid the rest of us!

[*Exit MRS. MACARTHY.*]

Mrs. D. (*In soliloquy.*) Dear me! how unfortunate I have been in answering this advertisement, but I never for a moment thought it could be from a gentleman, much less one of such an awful description! Oh! if I thought I could leave the house without being seen (*goes to window*); but that seems hopeless. Well, if I *must* meet him, I had better endeavour to conciliate him by making myself as agreeable as possible—if he's such a monster.

Enter COLONEL, looking very gracious and dignified.
(*Mrs. D. starts, uttering an involuntary—Oh!*)

Col. (Bowing.) May I ask, madam, to whom I am indebted for the honour of this visit?

Mrs. D. (Hesitatingly.) I—I—presume to yourself, sir; certainly not to me!

Col. You amaze me, madam! Do pray explain yourself! *(Groans aside—)* Oh, these women!

Mrs. D. (Half-crying.) You must be perfectly well aware, sir, that I am the *victim* of a gross *deception*, such as I should have thought one of your *age* and position never could have practised.

Col. (Bewildered.) Victim!—deception!—age!—*(Aside.)* And good gracious, she's in tears! *(Softening.)* Madam, I assure you that I am both innocent and ignorant of the cause of your grievance! *(Aside.)* Bless me, I feel quite interested in her.

Mrs. D. Why, sir, this is Bastion House, is it not?

Col. It is, madam.

Mrs. D. And you are the owner of it?

Col. (Bowing with his hand on his breast, and in a melancholy tone.) Most assuredly and unfortunately I am.

Mrs. D. (Aside.) Poor fellow, he too seems unhappy; but he deserves to suffer for his baseness. *(Aloud.)* Then, sir, what could have induced you to resort to the expedient of a vague advertisement, to induce an inoffensive female to take the charge of your extraordinary household?

Col. (Starting.) Ah! the mystery is at last unfolding; but no, I'm still where I was, I'm not—

Mrs. D. Why, surely, you'll not deny that you're *Instanter*, any more than I am *(Bursting into tears)* bound to acknowledge myself the deluded *Impromptu*!

Col. My dear madam, I see it all now, and that I too am the victim of a mistake, through not having advertised for a **GENTLEMAN**, to assist me in the control of an establishment rendered unbearable to me by unruly and rebellious females! Yes, I see now! *(Taking up a newspaper and reading advertisement.)*

"Wanted, a companionable person of method and education, to assist in the management of a small, but precise family, &c."

You, supposing the individual in request to be a *lady*, have in consequence applied, and, as I now presume, are the accomplished writer of this most (*taking letter from his pocket*) admirable of letters; and I have to apologise most earnestly for thus unwittingly misleading you. (*Aside.*) Bless my soul, what a fool I've been! Now, if all women were like this one! There's certainly a charm about her which I never before observed in the sex. (*Eagerly.*) Dearest madam, if you will consent to preside here, you will render me happy beyond my deserts, and I will try to make every allowance for the weakness and pertinacity of—even Mrs. Macarthy, for your sake.

Mrs. D. My dear Colonel, I can only promise you that I will do my best to insure you an agreeable home, and ask in return but a little "*love*" and a great deal of patience; for after all I'm but a woman.

Col. Egad! but one that it shall be the business of my life to please.

Curtain falls.

SECOND SYLLABLE.—CHASE.

Tom. *A somewhat fast young gentleman of sixteen.*

MISS DEBORAH. *Tom's aunt, an eccentric old maid.*

JULIA. *Tom's sister, a young lady of eighteen or twenty.*

MRS. HOWITZER.

JULIA'S WAITING-MAID.

SABRINA.

COSTUMES.—Simply those of domestic life, with the exception of aunt *Deborah's* riding-dress, which should be as grotesque as possible—a scarlet jacket and cavalier hat with scarlet feathers would be effective.

SCENE III.

A room in the house of Miss Deborah Dart (an elderly maiden of youthful notions and pretensions. Any quaint, old furniture would be well introduced). Miss Deborah appears in a riding-dress.

Miss Deborah. (Admiring herself.) Really the dress is a complete triumph, and becoming to a degree! Well, it only proves how accident will often suggest a bright idea, which one might spend a world of thought in vainly trying to accomplish; and to think that I owe all this to the dear Major! When I overheard him say to the Colonel that he thought a lady never looked so charming as in riding-dress, and said how admirable the Queen was at the last review in scarlet jacket and feathers, I resolved to show him *what* might be achieved to suit his taste. And I've kept my plan so secret that no other lady will be prepared to follow the hounds. Yes, even that Mrs. Howitzer will now be eclipsed, who is always trying to absorb everything and everybody; and as to that pert minx, my niece Julia, if she goes, she shall wear her brown linsey and my blue sunshade, or the bathing machine for weak eyes (as her brother Tom will persist in calling it); by the way here comes the young gentleman: he'll be astonished, and not a little proud, I think, to see his aunt so elegantly attired. (*Miss Deborah stands for a while in a simpering, affected attitude, which by degrees assumes indignation, as Tom, a young gentleman, who evidently has a vein of humour, staring with ridicule and astonishment, exclaims, walking round his aunt, convulsed with laughter—*)

Tom. Why, Aunt Deborah! what does it all mean? Tell me at once, or you'll be the death of me.

Aunt Deb. And pray, sir, is there anything so remarkable in seeing a lady equipped for the "Chase?"

Tom. (Still laughing). Aunt! I beg your pardon; but really I don't think I shall ever be serious again.

Aunt. Deb. Then, Thomas Titmus, the sooner you return to your senses the better, for I shall shortly have to confide to you (as my present protector in the absence of your father) a most serious matter ; but I can say no more till after the "meet" to-morrow.

Tom. Good gracious ! you don't mean to say that you're going in that style ?

Aunt Deb. Don't be impertinent, sir ; to-morrow I intend to follow the hounds.

Tom. What on foot ?

Aunt Deb. On foot, sir ! Are such things usual ? You think perhaps I cannot ride ! Ah ! (*With a triumphant air*) but unknown to any of you I've been practising on Sloomy for the last week, till now Dick Dawdle says he believes I shall carry everything *before* me.

Tom. But, Aunt Deborah, I wish to know how you reconcile this sudden fancy of yours with the lectures I heard you giving my sister Julia on the impropriety of horse-riding for ladies ? I distinctly heard you say that you considered it a *masculine* and *indecorous* exercise.

Aunt Deb. (*With deliberation.*) My dear Tom ; there is a certain period in life when a lady, having established her reputation for *dignity* and *elegance*, may adopt with impunity what dress or recreation she pleases to suit the *occasion* ; and I have the happiness to feel that in my case the *precise* period and the *occasion* have arrived.

Tom. Oh ! have they ? (*Bowing with mock reverence.*) Then your unworthy nephew is delighted to hear it, Aunt Deborah : but talking of arrivals, reminds me of what I came to tell you, that Major MacBang is below, and particularly wishes to see you.

Aunt Deb. Major MacBang ! Unkind boy, not to have told me this before ! Then the poor fellow has been alone all this time ?

Tom. Not a bit of it ! Julia's with him, and I left her

doing her best to make him happy; at all events, I never saw the Major looking so fascinating before.

Aunt Deb. (*Exultingly.*) The Major is always charming; and I know, Tom, that when you are more nearly related to him you will *love him* for my sake: but I must go, or he'll be bored to death, for Julia's no society for him.

Tom. (*Aside.*) Well! that's cool.

Aunt Deb. (*Leaving the room. Aside.*) Now the auspicious moment is so near I seem to be losing all my spirit; but I must take courage, and *consent* to have him, if only for my dear brother's sake. Happy coincidence, that he should see me in his favourite dress! [Exit AUNT DEB.

Tom. Well! I wonder what the Major will think when that figure presents itself! If the question had not already been popped to Julia, by Jove he'd have edged off now, for fear that madness might run in the family.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. (*Looking highly delighted.*) Oh, Tom! I've accepted him, because I think he'll make me as happy as he says.

Tom. Of course he will! He's rather old for you, though, Julia, and *uncommonly* hasty; but then you mustn't irritate him, that's all.

Julia. Oh! I don't mean to. I shall be very kind and good to him, if he'll always be as agreeable as he was to-day, and ready to perform all the nice promises he has made me. Why, do you know, Tom, he says he'll buy me a beautiful pony-chaise; and I'm to have the reins, and drive him about wherever I like? Yes! and, Tom, he's going to choose a horse for me, and I'm to ride *every day*; and as to Aunt Deborah—he says she may go to—Jericho!

Tom. Did he, though? I say, did you meet that antiquated relative as you came up?

Julia. No, I've not seen her; but hark! I hear her, though, and she's storming at somebody; and there's the Major's voice too. Oh dear!

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. (*Breathlessly.*) Oh! if you please, miss, your aunt's a faintin' on the stairs, and she's a tearin' her 'air and the feathers out of her 'at, and a screamin' and a sayin' YOU'RE not to come near her, and that Major Bang's a wile deceiver; and the Major's rushed out o' the 'ouse like anythink, a saying to me, "Give my love and dooty to Miss Julia, and tell her Miss Deborah ought to be put under a'rest."

Julia. Oh, Tom! do go and see what it's all about.

Tom. (*Laughing and rushing out.*) By Jove! I knew she was going mad.

Curtain falls.

SCENE IV.—*A Room in the House of COLONEL HOWITZER.*

Enter MRS. HOWITZER and SABRINA.

Mrs. H. And was that all your master said, Sabrina?

Sab. Not "azackly" all, mum; but 'twas all he meant me for to hear.

Mrs. H. Then pray tell me at once all that you *did* hear, for I fear there has been some misunderstanding.

Sab. Oh lor, mum! so do I! Well, mum! master comes in, and he says, says he, looking werry solemn, "Sabrina, where's your missis?" "Gone out, sir," says I; "Humph!" says he,—and then he sets to a walkin' up and down the room, and a talking to hisself like anythink.

Mrs. H. (*Impatiently.*) But you've told me as much as this before, Sabrina! Now I desire to know **ALL** the Colonel said.

Sab. Well, mum, I think I can tell you his "percise" words! He says, says he, "Bless me, how I've been taken in! But I'll go off to Major MacBang's and see if he can adwise me how to get rid of *her*! Oh! I have been basely deceived," says he; "here was a creature I thought all per-

fection, and she's turned out not only *faulty* but *wicious!*" Well, mum! that give me sich a turn, for I thought of you directly, mum (*here Mrs. HOWITZER starts with surprise and indignation*), because you know, mum, master never thought anybody perfection but you! With that he walks out of the 'ouse and says, " Sabrina, tell your missis not to expect me till she sees me."

Mrs. H. Sabrina, get ready to go with me to Major MacBang's. I must seek the Colonel there at once, for I cannot remain here in this dreadful suspense.

Sab. Lor, mum! no more can I, nor nobody else o' fine feelings, as Mrs. Macarthy said when she left to find her husband after he'd come back from Amerriker. (*Aside.*) Well, I'd rather be as I ham, a hinddependent, unpurteeted female, than the wife of the finest drum-major I ever seed.

[*Exit SABRINA.*

Mrs. H. (*In soliloquy.*) What cruel influence can this be? How I have studied him! and how happy I thought I had made him! and yet in a few hours the whole fabric seems to have been overthrown! But I must endeavour to leave by the next train for Chatham, in the hope of meeting him at Major MacBang's, or goodness only knows how it will end.

[*Exit MRS. HOWITZER.*

Curtain falls.

THE WHOLE WORD.—LOVECHASE.

COLONEL HOWITZER.

TOM.

MRS. HOWITZER.

JULIA.

MRS. MACARTHY.

SABRINA.

COSTUMES.—Walking costumes for the whole company. *Mrs. Macarthy* should have a "gampy" umbrella and a bundle. Portmanteaus and bags *ad lib.*

A few time-tables stuck about the room would give it the appearance of a railway station.

SCENE V.—*Waiting-room at Chatham Railway Station.*

Enter COL. HOWITZER.

Col. Egad, lost the train by one minute, and I must wait half an hour for the next. Well, I've a newspaper, which is some consolation—and I see I shall have to conceal myself behind it, for here comes Mrs. Macarthy; and much as the sex has improved in my estimation, I am not yet equal to that specimen of the Emerald Isle.

Enter MRS. MACARTHY (with a large bundle and umbrella).

Mrs. Mac. Sure I'm both tired and worn out, and little wonder for me, since I've trodden every inch of ground in this same Chatham; and although I've seen many decent and likely boys here, not one looks or answers to the name of Dennis. But I'm tould for certain that he's enlisted; and if he's above ground I'll find him! Another detachment's expected here soon, and I've made up my mind not to leave this station till my own particular part of the detachment arrives. (*Goes to window.*) Sure! there's Sabrina on the platform, and Mrs. Howitzer—the creature, looking heart-broken.

Enter SABRINA.

Sabrina, my child, what's brought you here?

Sub. Well, I believe, Mrs. Macarthy, the same as has brought you here. Missis and I is looking for a deserter.

Mrs. Mac. Sabrina, is it for the likes of you to be casting a slur in that way on the bould milinterry definders of your country?

Sab. Milit'ry defenders indeed! How you've altered your opinion of sojers since your Dennis has joined the army!

Mrs. Mac. 'Deed, it's not my opinion, but the soudjers that have altered; for it's a little thing that sometimes turns

the scale, and by the same token the army wanted but the bould presence and courage of my Dinnis to make heroes of them all in my estimation.

Sab. Oh, that's all very fine, but I can't abear such changeable people—well, I never! if here ain't Mrs. MacBang and her brother, and oh my! don't they look in a way!

Enter Mrs. MACBANG and Tom.

Julia. How sadly vexatious to lose the train! now we shall have to wait a long half-hour till the next starts. Oh dear, How shall I contain myself?

Tom. Well, I think your going at all is a foolish *Lovechase*, or I don't belive the Major's conversation with Col. Howitzer bore any reference to you whatever.

Julia. Then, Tom, I should like to know what right he had to speak of anybody else of the feminine gender but *me* in that emphatic manner. Cook says they were both in a tower-ing passion, and declaring that if it could not be done in any other way, legal means must be sought to get rid of *her*. Now who could that be but *me*?

Enter Mrs. HOWITZER.

Mrs. H. (Hysterically.) Why me—oh, my dear Julia, it's my happiness that is fading, not yours. The Colonel has come down to consult with the Major as to the best means of parting with *me*; for Sabrina heard him talking to himself before he left home, and saying that he had been bascly de-ceived by somebody, which must have been—

Col. (Steps forward.) A dishonest horse-dealer! Why, bless my soul, what a world of trouble you women have all been creating for yourselves! You must know, my dear wife, that I was anxious to surprise you on the anniversary of our wedding-day, with a present such as I thought you would appreciate. I gave a hundred guineas for a mare for you, which both Major Mac-Bang and myself believed to be thorough-bred, but she

afterwards turned out to be worthless ; so I set off at once to the Major to consult with him as to the best means of redress ; and this has been the “head and front of our offending.”

Mrs. H. Oh ! I might have known that you could never be unkind to me. Sabrina, how foolishly you have misled me !

Sab. Well, mum, who could have thought that anything but a *woman* could have aggravated him so ?

Mrs. Mac. Sure them mimbers of the millinterry persuasion, when wonst you get a hould of them, are the asiest led in the world, and I’m hoping it won’t be long before I spake from exarience.

Julia. Come, Tom, now that my mind’s relieved, I must go and look after the Major, or he’ll be getting up a little excitement on his own account.

Tom. With all my heart, for it’s my opinion (and I presume that of our kind friends here) that we had better do anything to avoid another scene.

Col. Confound it, no ! to leave so soon’s absurd.

We’ve yet to ask them if they’ve guessed the word ;

I think I’ve done *my* best to make it clear.

Mrs. H. Yes ! that you have, I’m sure, my Colonel dear, Although ’twas *I*, that, in Impromptu’s part, Gave the first hint, as I gave you my heart ; And then Miss Deborah—

Julia. Poor antiquated fright, Took to a wretched “habit,” which threw light On our proceedings,—and through that Major’s plot

Much was revealed.

Tom. But fearing you saw it not, *I* came to the rescue ; telling you ALL, and more Than my respected colleagues breathed before, And so I make my bow.

Mrs. Mac.

And sure it's time.

The craturers want more rason, and less rhyme;
And I'd be taching them some comprehension,
But maybe'd give offence.

*Sa*ī*s.*

Then scorn the intention,
For they're not so precious dull, I'm werry cer-
tain,
And I can't "zactly" see why we don't drop the
curtain.

Curtain falls.





WHIMSICAL.

FIRST SYLLABLE.—WHIM.

MR. ERNEST VERMILION. *An erratic artist.*

MR. CICERO BATES. *A sentimental author.*

MRS. MOSELY. *Their landlady.*

MISS MARY MOSELY. *Her niece.*

COSTUMES.—*Vermilion* in a short lounging-coat and smoking-cap; *Bates*, frock-coat and pork-pie hat; *Mrs. Mosely* in a cotton gown and white cap; *M. Mary Mosely* in a stuff walking-dress and a turban

SCENE I.—MR. ERNEST VERMILION and MR. CICERO BATES
discovered, the one lounging and smoking, the other listlessly turning over the leaves of a book.

Vermilion. (*Exclaims.*) Well! this is not so bad, after all. I came down here to escape the dust, heat, and general discomfort of London at this season of the year, and by the merest chance in the world have slipped into the snuggest quarters imaginable; everything to my hand, and no interruption to my studies. By jingo! what stunning pictures I shall be able to paint! And you, Bates? I suppose you are about to astonish the literary world by some startling production—the result of your quiet sojourn here?

Cicero. (*Affectionately.*) Startling? Yes! perhaps so. I certainly am just now engaged on a very profound work, which I rather think will establish my reputation, and astonish some of my friends at home, who chose to call my retirement to the country a mere "*whim.*" Well; I had very good reasons for coming, and have still better for remaining, at all events till the theatrical business calls me to London again. In fact, this place suits my frame of mind and taste exactly; and I'm in no hurry to leave it.

Ver. (*Jocosely.*) Hear! hear! Cicero; you're a good, sensible fellow, and doubtless, like me, you rejoice in the belief that there are no silly women about the place to bewilder your brain and interfere with your gravity.

Cic. Just so, Vermilion; by the way, that reminds me that if I want my usual quiet half-hour by the river side, I must go now; so, good-bye, old fellow—for the present.

Ver. Quite right, Bates; and I shall be off for my constitutional. (*Exit BATES.*) Bother the fellow! I thought he'd never go, and I should lose the chance of my "quiet half-hour." I certainly do confess a very great dislike to interruptions, yet there's something unaccountably agreeable and fascinating in the manners of our landlady, and as she is

generally in the garden about this time, I find a little chat with her vastly refreshing; so, while my friend Cicero (like a poor, sentimental muff as he is,) is wandering by the river side, invoking the "dismals" for the completion of his melodrama, I, like a cunning old stager, seek my recreation in the society of the charming widow Mosely.

[*Exit* VERMILION.]

Enter CICERO, with MISS MARY MOSELY leaning on his arm.

Cic. Fortunate coincidence that your aunt should choose this time to attend to her flowers, and my friend Vermilion the same precise moment for his "constitutional," as he calls it. And thus, Miss Mary, being perfectly quiet and free from interruption, we can read and discuss your favourite poets.

Mary. Oh! that will indeed be charming. And, first of all, you know that you promised to read and explain to me some of those passages in Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy" which I fear I'm much too dull to understand.

Cic. With pleasure. The book is in the library; shall we go for it?

[*Exit both.*]

Enter MRS. MOSELY and MR. VERMILION.

Mrs. Mosely. (*Seating herself.*) Excuse me, sir, I think you were about to say that you regretted something.

Vermilion. I was, my dear madam, and that something is the only objection I have to my otherwise delightful abode here.

Mrs. M. (*Affecting surprise.*) Indeed! My dear sir, may I venture to inquire what it may be?

Ver. (*Aside.*) Well, it's of no use; I see it must come to a climax. My dear Mrs. Mosely, it is that I am not favoured so often as I could wish with the society of the charming mistress of this elysium.

Mrs. M. (*Mincingly.*) Why, you see, my dear Mr. Ver-

milion, the charge of my niece renders it so necessary that I should lead a retired, although I will not say a *lonely* life exactly, and that I should be most particular and circumspect in my household.

Ver. (Warmly and admiringly.) Most admirable of women ! Believe me, it is this kind watchfulness over the welfare of your niece, added to the many other graces of your sex, which has rendered you so attractive to me ; and I cannot, dare not, lose another moment in declaring to you the power (*kneels and takes her hand*), when—

Enter CICERO and MARY. VERMILION starts up. MRS. MOSELY looks confused, MARY and CICERO ditto.

Ver. (To CICERO.) The devil ! is this your walk by the river side ?

Cic. Well, old fellow ! is that your “constitutional ?”

Mrs. M. Mary ! are these your studies ?

Mary. My dear aunt ! you have forgotten your flowers.

Curtain falls.

SECOND SYLLABLE.—SI.

CLARA D'ARVILLE } *young Actresses in search of employment.*
SISSY D'ARVILLE } *ment.*

COSTUMES.—*Clara* in a very simple walking-dress ; *Sissy* rather meanly dressed.

SCENE II.—*A room with tea-things laid ; faded evening dresses, artificial flowers, and satin slippers lying about ; Sissy D'Arville sitting anxiously waiting for her sister's return, when*

Enter CLARA.

Sissy. (Rising to meet her.) Dear Clara ! I'm so pleased to see you home again ! Oh ! I know you've had success, for your face is so bright and happy-looking.

Clara. Yes, Sissy ! I've seen Mr. Crammer the manager, and what do you think ? He has not only engaged me, but you too, and even offers to take little Ned, as a sort of odd call-boy for the green-room !

Sissy. (*Clapping her hands.*) Well ! at last our fortune's made ! Oh ! sit down, Clara darling, and while we have tea, tell me every word that passed. There ! I shall give you a good big lump of sugar, because we shall have plenty now.

Clara. (*After removing her bonnet and shawl, sits down.*) Well, Sissy, first of all I must tell you that Mr. Crammer is a very nice, kind man, and listened with so much interest to all I had to say about poor dear mamma. Why, do you know, he remembered her quite well when she used to play in "The White Lady of the Gloomy Street," and spoke of her points with so much pleasure, and said that he was sure with a little study I might be nearly as good, for my manner and figure were just like hers.

Sissy. So they are, Clara dear ! Still I don't think either of us can ever be so great in tragedy as poor mamma was ; but *you* certainly did act most beautifully in "Creature Comforts," and would have made a name, I do believe, if that wicked old manager, Crank, had not said that it was got up at such an expense that it nearly ruined the house.

Clara. Never mind, Sissy ! I'm now to have the first part in "The Woes of the Willows," a new piece by Mr. Cicero Bates ; and they say it's very clever, for he's an actor as well as an author.

Sissy. And what part am I to have, Clara ?

Clara. I don't know yet, but it will be a lively one, because I mentioned that when you had to play sentiment it invariably made you ill.

Sissy. Oh ! that's excellent ! Then when do we attend the first rehearsal ?

Clara. To-morrow, at eleven, as they are anxious for me to begin at once in "The Woes of the Willows," for the lady

whose place I'm about to fill is obliged to resign—and what do you think for?

Sissy. (*Inquiringly.*) Because she has to find her own wardrobe?

Clara. No! you'll never guess. Well! she doesn't always *sigh* in the right place; and when she does, Mr. Crammer says it's like a gun going off.

Sissy. Clara! I never heard such a thing! I know that some ladies can't scream well, nor others die nicely, and few can laugh musically, but I never heard of anything so absurd as that.

Clara. Is it not droll? Well, Sissy, while you clear away the tea-things I'll go and look over my part, and see if poor little Ned has fit clothes to appear in to-morrow.

[*Exit CLARA.*

Curtain falls.

THIRD SYLLABLE.—CALL.

CLARA and SISSY D'ARVILLE.

NED. *Their brother.*

COSTUMES.—Both *Clara* and *Sissy* should be dressed in light dresses of no particular material; *Ned* in a boy's jacket, &c.

Green-room of the Theatre, CLARA sitting with a book in her hand, SISSY crocheting.

Enter little NED, as from the Stage.

Clara. Now, Ned, you know it will be your place to tell us when we are to go and dress, and be sure you always give us plenty of time.

Ned. Oh, I'll take care of that! you are not obliged to go just yet, for the comedy's not half played.

Sissy. Is it a full house?

Ned. I believe you; and they are laughing so at the

comedy, that Clara will have to be tremendous before she can bring them back to sentiment. [Exit Ned.

Clara. Heigho! Ah! I see I must make my kneeling scene heavier than usual, and that's a *bore*, for it's awfully trying.

Sissy. It's a great shame not to have "The Woes of the Willows" first, for people always prefer being made wretched first, and happy afterwards; and it's more natural that they should.

Enter Ned.

Ned. (*Hurriedly.*) Now then, you must go and dress, as I've got to *call* them for the second scene, fourth act of the comedy.

THE WHOLE WORD.—WHIMSICAL.

SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE. *An irascible old English baronet, father to Capt. Absolute.*

CAPT. ABSOLUTE. *A gay young officer, in love with Lydia.*

MRS. MALAPROP. *A pompous old lady, aunt to Lydia.*

MISS LYDIA LANGUISH. *A whimsical young lady.*

COSTUMES.—Period about 1790. *Sir Anthony*, dress laced across, knee-breeches, buckles, shoes, powdered wig, walkingstick, and nose slightly reddened; *Capt. Absolute*, scarlet coat, white leather breeches, jack-boots, sword, and powdered hair; *Mrs. Malaprop*, gay chintz dress looped up, yellow petticoat, lace neckerchief crossed over bosom, powdered hair and patch; *Lydia*, blue or pink dress looped up, small white hat, powdered hair, patches, and fan; servant, brown jacket, blue petticoat, white muslin apron, black turned-up hat, black shoes, and buckles.

Illustrated by a Scene from "THE RIVALS," Act IV.,
Scene II.

MRS. MALAPROP'S Lodgings.

Enter MRS. MALAPROP and LYDIA.

Mrs. M. Why, thou perverse one!—tell me what you can object to in him? Isn't he a handsome man? tell me that. A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lydia. (Aside.) She little thinks whom she is praising. *(Aloud.)* So is Beverley, ma'am.

Mrs. M. No caparisons, miss, if you please. Caparisons don't become a young woman. No! Captain Absolute is indeed a fine gentleman.

Lydia. (Aside.) Ay, the Captain Absolute you have seen.

Mrs. M. Then he's so well bred—so full of alacrity and adulation. He has so much to say for himself, in such good language too. His physiognomy so grammatical; then his presence so noble! I protest when I saw him I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—"Hesperian curls, the front of Job himself! an' eyes, like March, to threaten at command! a station, like Harry Mercury, new"—something about kissing—on a hill. However, the similitude struck me directly.

Lydia (Aside.) How enraged she'll be presently when she discovers her mistake!

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, ma'am.

Mrs. M. Show them up here. [Exit SERVANT.]
Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving yourself as becomes a young woman. Show your good breeding at least, though you forgot your duty.

Lydia Madam. I have told you my resolution: I shall not

Whimsical.

only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak or look at him. (*Flings herself into a chair with her face from the door.*)

Enter SIR ANTHONY and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir A. Here we are, Mrs. Malaprop, come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty—and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow. I don't know what's the matter, but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip. (*He has hold of the CAPTAIN'S coat-tail.*)

Mrs. M. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair—I am ashamed for the cause! (*Aside to her.*) Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you! pay your respects!

Sir A. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance. (*Aside to him.*) Now, Jack, speak to her.

Capt. A. (*Aside, L.*) What the devil shall I do? You see, sir, she won't even look at me whilst you are here—I knew she wouldn't—I told you so. Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together. (*Seems to expostulate with his father.*)

Sir A. (*L.C.*) I say, sir, I won't stir a foot yet.

Mrs. M. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence over my niece is very small. (*Aside to her.*) Turn round, Lydia, I blush for you!

Sir A. May I not flatter myself that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son? (*Aside to him.*) Why don't you begin, Jack? Speak, you puppy—speak!

Mrs. M. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any. She will not say she has. (*Aside to her.*) Answer, hussy! Why don't you answer?

Sir A. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness. (*Aside to him.*) Zounds! sirrah! why don't you speak?

Capt. A. Hem! hem! Madam—hem!—(CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE crosses to LYDIA, attempts to speak, then returns to SIR ANTHONY.) 'Faith, sir, I am confounded!—and so—so confused!—I told you I should be so, sir—I knew it. The—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir A. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it? Go up, and speak to her directly. (The CAPTAIN makes signs to MRS. MALAPROP to leave them together.)

Mrs. M. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together?—Ah! you stubborn little vixen! (Aside to her.)

Sir A. Not yet, ma'am, not yet! What the devil are you at? Unlock your jaws, sirrah, or—(aside, and shaking his cane.)

Capt. A. (Draws near LYDIA, aside.) Now heaven send she may be too sullen to look round!—I must disguise my voice. (Speaks in a low, hoarse tone.) Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love? Will not—

Sir A. What the devil ails the fellow? Why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsey!

Capt. A. The—the excess of my awe, and my—my modesty, quite choke me!

Sir A. Ah! your modesty again! I'll tell you what, Jack, if you don't speak out directly, and glibly too, I shall be in such a rage! Mrs. Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side-front. (MRS. MALAPROP seems to chide LYDIA.)

Capt. A. So! all will out, I see! (Goes up to LYDIA—speaks softly.) Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all emotion at present.

LYDIA. (Aside.) Heavens! 'tis Beverley's voice!—(looks round by degrees, then starts up.) Is this possible?—my Beverley!—how can this be?—my Beverley!

Capt. A. (Aside, going to L.) Ah! 'tis all over!

Sir A. Beverley!—the devil!—Beverley! What can the girl mean?—This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs. M. (R.C.) For shame, hussy! for shame!—your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes! Beg Captain Absolute's pardon, directly.

Lydia. I see no Captain Absolute, but my beloved Beverley!

Sir A. Zounds! the girl's mad—her brain's turned by reading!

Mrs. M. O' my conscience, I believe so!—what do you mean by "Beverley," hussy?—You saw Captain Absolute before to-day; there he is—your husband that shall be.

Lydia. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my Beverley—

Sir A. Oh! she's as mad as Bedlam!—or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick?—Come here, sirrah; who the devil are you?

Capt. A. 'Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir A. Are you my son or not?—answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Capt. A. (Aside.) Ye powers of impudence, befriend me! Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be yours also, I hope my duty has always shown.

Sir A. Exceedingly obliged to you, indeed.

Capt. A. (Crosses, c.) Mrs. Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer—and shall be proud to add, affectionate nephew. I need not tell my Lydia that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name and a station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lydia. So!—there will be no elopement after all! (Sullenly—goes up.)

Sir A. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow!—To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Capt. A. Oh, you flatter me, sir—you compliment—'tis my modesty, you know, sir—my modesty, that has stood in my way.

Sir A. Oh! curse your modesty! Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you've made a fool of your father, you dog, —I am. So this was your penitence, your duty, and obedience!—I thought it was confoundedly sudden. “You never heard their names before,” not you! What! “the Languishes of Worcestershire,” hey?—“if you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired!”—Ah! you dissembling villain! What! (*pointing to LYDIA*) she squints, don't she?—“a little red-haired girl,” hey? Why, you hypocritical young rascal—I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head!

Capt. A. 'Tis with difficulty, sir—I am confused—very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs. M. O lud, Sir Anthony! (*comes down R.*) A new light breaks in upon me! hey!—how! what! Captain, did you write the letters, then? What!—am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of an “old weather-beaten she-dragon”—hey?

Sir A. Did you call her a dragon, Jack? (*MRS. MALAPROP follows CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE round the stage.*)

Mrs. M. Oh, mercy!—was it *you* that reflected on my parts of speech?

Capt. A. (L.) Dear sir! my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me.—I shall certainly not be able to stand it.

Sir A. Come, come, Mrs. Malaprop, we must forget and forgive. Odds-life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good tempered, and so gallant!—hey! Mrs. Malaprop!

Mrs. M. Well, Sir Anthony, since *you* desire it, we will not anticipate the past;—so mind, young people—our retrospection will be all to the future.

Sir A. Come, we must leave them together, *Mrs. Malaprop*: they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant!—Jack, isn't the cheek as I said, *hey?*—and the eye, *you rogue?*—and the lip, *hey?* Come, *Mrs. Malaprop*, we'll not disturb their tenderness—theirs is the time of life for happiness! (*sings*) “*Youth's the season made for joy*”—*hey?* Odds-life! I'm in such spirits—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, ma'am—(*gives his hand to Mrs. MALAPROP—sings*) “*Tol de rol*”—'Gad, I should like to have a little fooling myself—“*Tol de rol! de rol!*”

[*Exit singing, and handing Mrs. MALAPROP off, R.*
LYDIA sits sullenly in her chair]

Capt. A. (Aside.) So much thought bodes me no good. So grave, Lydia?

Lydia. Sir!

Capt. A. (Aside.) So! egad! I thought as much! that monosyllable has froze me! What, Lydia! now that we are as happy in our friends' consent as in our mutual vows—

Lydia. (Peevishly.) Friends' consent, indeed!

Capt. A. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlement as—

Lydia. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

Capt. A. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the license—and—

Lydia. The license! I hate license!

Capt. A. Oh, my love, be not so unkind! Thus let me entreat. (*Kneeling.*)

Lydia. Pshaw! what signifies kneeling, when you know I must have you?

Capt. A. (Rising.) Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you :—if I have lost your heart, I resign the rest. (*Aside.*) 'Gad, I must try what a little spirit will do.

Lydia. (Rising.) Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud. What, you have been treating me like a child!—humouring my romance; and laughing, I suppose, at your success? (*Crosses to L.*)

Capt. A. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me—only hear—

Lydia. So, while *I* fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation—and I am myself the only dupe at last! (*Walking about in a heat.*) But here, sir, here is the picture—*Beverley's* picture—(*taking a miniature from her bosom*)—which I have worn night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties! There, sir! (*Flings it to him.*) And be assured, I throw the original from my heart as easily. (*Crosses, R.*)

Capt. A. Nay, nay, ma'am, we will not differ as to that! Here (*taking out a picture*) here is Miss Lydia Languish—What a difference! Ay, *there* is the heavenly, assenting smile that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes! These are the lips that sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar! And there the half-resentful blush that *would* have checked the ardour of my thanks! Well, all that's past; all over, indeed! There, madam—in beauty, that copy is not equal to you; but, in my mind, its merit over the original in being still the same, is such that—I'll put it in my pocket. (*Puts it up again.*)

Lydia (Softening.) 'Tis your own doing, sir—I—I suppose you are perfectly satisfied.

Capt. A. Oh, most certainly: sure now, this is much

better than being in love ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! There's some spirit in this ! What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises ? All that's of no consequence, you know. To be sure people will say that miss was "*whimsical*," and didn't know her own mind, but never mind that. Or perhaps they may be ill-natured enough to hint that the gentleman grew tired of the lady, and forsook her, but don't let that fret you.

Lydia. There's no bearing his insolence ! (*Bursts into tears.*)

Curtain falls.





WEDLOCK.

FIRST SYLLABLE.—WED.

ADOLPHUS RACKET. *A happy Bridegroom.*

BELINDA RACKET. *His blushing Bride.*

PENELOPE PONDER }
CLARISSA MILDWAY } *Belinda's bridesmaids.*

COSTUMES.—*Adolphus* should be attired in a black suit and white necktie; *Belinda* as much like a bride as the properties of the establishment will admit; *Penelope* and *Clarissa* in light silk dresses and white bonnets.

SCENE I.—ADOLPHUS RACKET having won the heart and hand of BELINDA MILDMAY, the happy couple have just returned from church, and are discovered in an ante-room with the two bridesmaids, PENELOPE PONDER and CLARISSA MILDMAY. Bride and bridegroom ascend to the breakfast. PENELOPE and CLARISSA remain in conversation.

Penelope. Dear Belinda! I trust she'll be happy. How lovely she looked at the altar! did she not?

Clarissa. Oh, charming! and how full the church was. By the way, did you see the Tomkinses in the rector's pew?

Pen. See them! Of course I did; for I looked on purpose to get a glimpse of Harry when Adolphus drew the ring from his pocket, and said so boldly—“With this ring I thee ‘wed!’”

Clar. I thought Belinda would have broken down when she came to the “obey;” and I believe, after all, she only muttered the word.

Pen. Most likely! for *my* part, I would never say it, whatever I might think! But, Clarissa, let us go, or they will have commenced the breakfast without us, and I promised Tom Sillaby to sit by him, to prompt him in a speech he has got up for the occasion, in which he intends to speak in the highest terms of bridesmaids in general, and *me* in particular.

Clar. Well, for *my* part, I think the kindest thing you can do will be to prompt him to leave it alone; for I’m sure if *that* simpleton is to be our representative, I shall wish that Belinda had not made *me* a bridesmaid.

Pen. (*Patronizingly.*) My dear child! these things are entirely a matter of opinion; and as I have a great regard for Tom Sillaby, I hope you will on this occasion honour him by your attention, and believe him sensible at least when he proposes the health of the bridesmaids, and extols the merits and graces of our sex.

Clar. (*Scornfully.*) Bosh!

[*Exit both.*

SECOND SYLLABLE.—LOCK.

BELINDA RACKET.

PENELOPE PONDER.

COSTUMES.—*Belinda* in morning gown, *Penelope* in morning walking-dress.

SCENE II.—*BELINDA* discovered sitting alone, sadly and thoughtfully contemplating something she holds in her hand.

Belinda. Oh! how soon have all my visions of happiness disappeared! What could possess me to open his dressing-case? Certainly not curiosity, and most assuredly not with any idea of finding such a proof of his baseness as this! Oh! had I used the forbidden key, and discovered him a Blue-Beard, I could have borne it better! I wish dear *Penelope Ponder* would come, that I might confide this awful secret to her, and ask her advice. Would that I could burn this fascinating horror I hold in my hand; but no! it must be kept as a sad—sad—proof! (*A knock at the door, when enters PENELOPE. BELINDA rushes to her friend, and they embrace. BELINDA in tears.*)

Penelope. What, my dearest *Belinda*! and are you *so soon* unhappy? Pray tell me at once the cruel cause of all this?

Bel. (*Hysterically, while showing lock of hair.*) There, *Penelope*! found in *HIS* dressing-case!

Pen. (*With affected dismay.*) What, a *lock of hair*, and not yours! Oh, *Belinda*! this is indeed a serious cause of grief. Have you demanded an explanation?

Bel. No! I could not; for I discovered it after he had left this morning. Oh! what *shall I do?* Tell me, dear *Penelope*.

Pen. Well, my dear, I would advise the most mature reflection before you mention to him what you have found;

observe him closely, and if he cares much for this (*sneeringly*) treasure, he will soon miss it, and the fact will be evident in his manner; but (*starting*) Belinda! what *horribly coarse hair*. Why, none but a Hottentot could have grown such stubble as this.

Bel. Ah! that's what makes the matter worse! I've always heard him say how he admired wavy hair; and you know, *Penelope*, that mine never would (*mournfully*) even crinkle without a world of plaiting.

Pen. Poor disappointed child! I am grieved that I must leave you now; but act as I have told you, and to-morrow morning I will call after breakfast, to hear how this terrible affair progresses. [They embrace, and curtain falls.

THE WHOLE WORD.—WEDLOCK.

ADOLPHUS RACKET.

BELINDA RACKET.

PENELOPE PONDER.

CLARISSA MILDMAV.

COSTUMES.—*Adolphus* in lounging-coat; *Belinda* in morning-dress; *Penelope* and *Clarissa* in morning walking-dress.

SCENE III.—BELINDA and ADOLPHUS sitting at breakfast.

Belinda sullenly turning over the leaves of a book.

ADOLPHUS looks up from the newspaper, and says—

Adolphus. Well, Belinda! how much longer are you going to maintain this extraordinary manner? You are evidently put out about something, and I should uncommonly like to know what that something is; so will you oblige me by an explanation?

Belinda. No, *Adolphus*, I will not! It's sufficient for you to know that I shall never be happy again.

Adol. Well, that's cool; and more than "sufficient,"

seeing that I sought “*wedlock*” in the hope of securing your happiness as well as my own for life.

Bel. Don’t tell untruths, Adolphus; you married me to make me the most miserable of wives, and you have succeeded.

Adol. Belinda, you are trying my patience fearfully, and I can tell you that it won’t last much longer; and if you don’t give me *some* opportunity of justifying myself, I shall be in a fearful passion directly. (*Paces up and down the room.*) No! (*Raising his voice*) Belinda Racket, *passion’s* not the word: I shall *storm with rage*.

Bel. Ah! cruel man! just what I might have expected. (*A knock at the door.* Enter PENELOPE PONDER and CLARISSA MILDMAY. *Both embrace BELINDA with tears of sympathy.* *BELINDA whispers to PENELOPE—*) I’m so glad you have come, dear, for I do believe he was just going to kill me.

Pen. Have you shown him the proof of his wickedness?

Bel. No! I dared not.

Pen. Well, do so now, and we will help you to intimidate him. Oh! (*with a shudder*) what a ruffian he looks!

Bel. Perfidious man! does not that fill you with remorse? (*Throws him the lock of hair.*)

Adol. Where on earth did you get this from? Why, this is a piece of my poor pony’s tail, cut off when he was shot, in remembrance of the many times he nearly broke my neck! Well, Belinda (*laughing heartily*), you *must* have been on the look-out for a trouble when you made one of this!

Bel. Oh! how foolish I have been. Will you forgive me, Adolphus?

Adol. Well! yes! but upon one condition—that you promise to keep this relic of my poor old pony, as a memento of the only cause of anxiety I ever gave, or mean to give you.

Pen. Well, now that you are restored to happiness,

Belinda, I think I shall go home and reflect on the improbability of uninterrupted bliss, whether in married or single life. So come along, Clarissa, and we will meditate together.

Clar. Oh! no, thank you. I am not in a meditative mood! Nevertheless, I'll go with you, if it's only to put an end to this matrimonial scene. [*Curtsies, and the curtain falls.*]

ILLITERATE.

FIRST SYLLABLE.—ILL.

SCENE I.

MISS ARABELLA FIZZLESKIN (a fashionable young lady) reclining upon a couch: anxious mamma sitting by. DR. IODINE is announced.

Dr. Iodine. Good morning, Mrs. Fizzleskin ! good morning, Miss Arabella !

Mrs. Fizzleskin. Oh, Dr. Iodine, I'm so glad you've come, for my dear Arabella is so very ill !

Dr. I. Indeed ! I'm sorry to hear it. Pray how did the attack come on ?

Mrs. F. Well, doctor ; first by excessive restlessness ; then by taking a dislike to all her former pleasures ; quarrelling incessantly with her brothers and sisters ; and finally this morning, with a pulse—yes, I'm positive—at 250, trampling on her best bonnet, and throwing it *into the dusthole*.

Dr. I. Ah ! extreme irritability of the nervous system : let me feel the pulse. Well, Miss Arabella, how long have you been suffering from these uncomfortable symptoms ?

Miss Arabella. (With great effort.) Oh ! for more than three weeks (is it not, ma ?), ever since the Twiddlebodies went to Scarboro'.

Dr. I. Umph ! I see you know that family.

Miss Arabella. (Warmly.) Oh, yes ! they're our dearest friends, and since they have left I have been bored to death in this house !

Dr. I. Hem! Sleep well at night?

Miss Arabella. (*Languidly.*) Never close my eyes.

Dr. I. Appetite good?

Miss Arabella. (*Pettishly.*) I've no relish for anything.

Dr. I. Ah, yes! I see! that will do, Miss Arabella; oblige me by leaving the room while I speak with your mamma as to the treatment.

[*Exit Miss ARABELLA, yawning listlessly.*

Dr. I. (*To Mrs. F.*) Well, really, Mrs. Fizzleskin, this is one of those cases which may easily be got over, for—with the exception of a little cooling draught which I will send—the remedy is in your hands; in fact, it is a parallel case to the one that I have just left, and may be cured by a porkpie hat and a trip to Scarboro'. Miss Arabella is evidently anxious to be near her friends the Twiddlebodies, and it will doubtless be convenient for you to gratify her. Should the dear girl be not quite herself after this, I would strongly urge an additional feather to the hat, or an occasional walk on the beach, with Mr. Augustus Twiddlebody, for instance, would, I apprehend, be of the greatest service in regulating the pulsation, and giving tone to the system! So permit me to wish you a good morning, Mrs. Fizzleskin.

Mrs. F. (*Warmly and gratefully.*) Thanks, dear doctor; good morning! (*Exit DR. IODINE.*) What an *eminently* skilful man that is, and how thoroughly he makes himself acquainted with the constitutions of his patients! Well, to Scarboro' we *must go*, whether Mr. Fizzleskin can afford it or not; my sweet Arabella must not be sacrificed to his obstinacy.

[*Exit MRS. FIZZLESKIN.*

SECOND SYLLABLE.—LITTER.

SCENE II.—*An artist's studio in great confusion.* MR. WALTER CARMINE, *in a state of hilarity, in the midst* *exclaims—*

Artist. Well, this is jolly! and I do think I may at last

flatter myself on my perfect freedom ! at all events, free from the invasions of that confounded old scratcher and general rectifier, Mrs. Flick, my former landlady. This is something like a den ! I'll have my T squares all round the room, throw my parallel rules in oblique directions, a compass shall be in every corner, and tobacco, blessed weed ! I'll blow thee till I lose myself in the clouds !—But, by Jove ! there's Mrs. Boltoozle's picture ; I must pitch into that, or the *beginning* of my happiness will be the *end* of my means. (*Takes up picture and looks at it.*) Ah ! now there'll be something like a chance of finishing it decently, without fear of its being rough-cast from the dust Tabitha Flick amused herself by raising every morning. (*Commences painting and whistling.* A knock at the door, and enter MRS. SCARUM, followed by JEMIMA JERKEM with dust-pan and broom. Artist rises in a furious passion.)

Mrs. S. Good morning, Mr. Carmine ; we've just come to dust a little, and put your room to rights. Now, Jemima, you needn't be five minutes about it.

Artist. (*In a loud voice.*) Jemima won't be *one*, if I know it ; so just do me the favour to make yourselves scarce.

Mrs. S. (*Very warmly.*) Mr. Carmine, do you know who you're speaking to, and that these rooms are mine, and to be dusted and purified when I think proper ? Go on, Jemima.

Jemima (*from a corner of the room exclaims—*). Oh, my ! what a 'orrid litter he's got about him ! Look here, mum ! here's thrice pipes down here in a beautiful chimbley ornament, and a lot of tabakker crammed into one o' them best tumblers you give tēnpence for. (*All this time MR. CARMINE, with smothered wrath, pretends to be painting.*)

Mrs. S. Oh, the monster ! For fifteen years I've been a housekeeper, and in the habit of letting my rooms to artists, some of them poor enough, Heaven knows ! and mad enough ! and most of them *dirty* enough for anything, but never was any *so* bad as this !

Jemima. (*Looking bewildered.*) Oh, it's *beastly*, mum! I don't know where to begin *first*!

Artist. (*Rising coolly.*) Oh, yes, you *do*, Jemima! you'll oblige by beginning outside my door, and Mrs. Scarum will oblige me by placing herself there with you, or—or—(*raising his voice to a desperate and murderous pitch*) I'll cut you both in two with my *palette* knife.

(*JEMIMA, screaming, runs to the door, MRS. SCARUM hastily follows, vociferating*)— You leave my rooms this day month, Mr. Car—

(*MR. CARMINE shuts and locks the door, then soliloquizes.*) Now for a spree! I can't work to-day, that's flat. I'll go out, buy a hundred of cigars and two bottles of whisky; bring in Tom Bleathers and Harry Swigwell, and hang me, if we don't try to cure this Mother Scarum as they do bacon—by smoking her.

[*Exit MR. WALTER CARMINE.*

THIRD SYLLABLE.—ATE.

SCENE III.—*JEMIMA JERKEM and SARY-ANN PODGE discovered at tea in MR. CARMINE'S kitchen; that gentleman having set up housekeeping, has secured JEMIMA'S valuable services as domestic.*

Sary-Ann. Oh, Jemima, what 'appiness! If all artises' places is like this, I wish I could hear of one! Ain't this different to Mrs. Scarum's?

Jemima. Oh, don't mention her, a 'orrid thing! I "ate" her! and I says so to Mr. Carmine the other morning, and he says, says he, Indeed, Jemima! then I 'ope we shall never see her again.

Sary-Ann. Lor, so do I! But Jemima, only to think of his being such a hangel as to allow follerers!

Jemima. And in such a 'ansom way, too! He says to me the other morning, Jemima, says he, you can have as many follerers as you like, only I should adwisc you not to have

'em all at one time, as the 'ouse is *rayther* small, and I shouldn't wish anybody to be "ill-convenienced."

Sary-Ann. Well, all I can say is, that he's a great deal too good for this world.

Jemima. He's a great deal better than any missis; you don't catch him a-coming down and a-prying and a-poking his nose into everythink.

Sary-Ann. Them's the mean-sperritted things as makes a gal's life a misery, and jist what I've got to contend with; not a *single* follerer allowed! And as to perkesites, why, she even turns all master's old clothes into geranums and jugs; but I'm a—— Jemima, I do believe there's your master a callin'!

Jemima. (*Pettishly.*) What a noosance he is! He ought to know how I "ate" to be disturbed when I've got a friend to tea. (*Master calls Jemima.*) Yes, sir! I'm a-coming, sir. Here, have another eup, dear, before I go.

Sary-Ann. No, dear, no more of nothin' for me. (*Master calls again impatiently.*) There, you had better go and see what *he* wants.

Jemima. Ah! I suppose I must; then *Sary-Ann*, dear I'll let you out as I go upstairs.

Sary-Ann. (*Rising and putting on her shawl*) Wery wel, Jemima; I must say adoo to this ere paradise, and go home to my "halligator" of a missis. [*Both retire.*]

THE WHOLE WORD.—ILLITERATE.

*Illustrated by a Scene from Sheridan's Comedy of
"THE RIVALS."*

MISS LYDIA LANGUISH *discovered dressed in costume of the period.* Enter MRS. MALAPROP and SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Mrs. Malaprop. There, Sir Anthony, there stands the deliberate simpleton who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Miss Lydia Languish. Madame, I thought you once—

Mrs. M. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all; thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you would promise to forget this fellow; to *illiterate* him, I say, from your memory.

Lyd. Ah! madam, our memories are independent of our will. It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs. M. But I say it is, miss. There is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed; and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Lyd. What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus?

Mrs. M. Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it. But tell me, will you promise me to do as you're bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

Lyd. Madam, I must tell you plainly that, had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

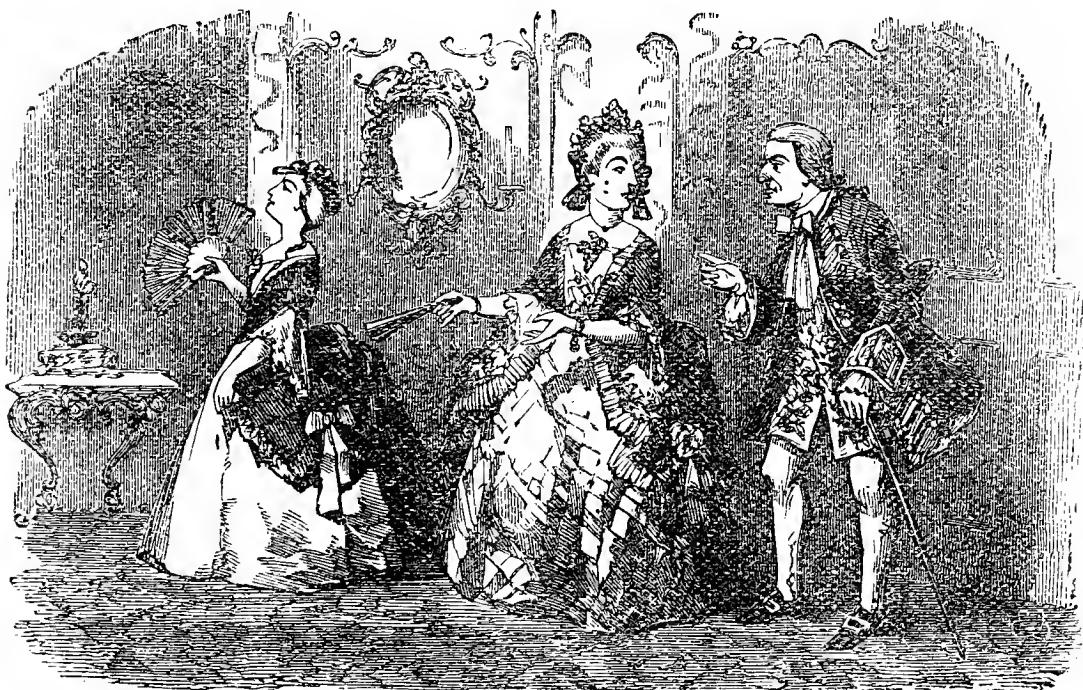
Mrs. M. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest, in matrimony, to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a black a-more; and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made; and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him 'tis unknown what tears I shed! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lyd. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. M. Take yourself to your room, you are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours.

Lyd. Willingly, ma'am ; I cannot change for the worse.

[*Exit LYDIA.*]



Mrs. M. There's a little intricate hussy for you !

Sir Anthony. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am ; all that is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid ~~arriving~~ forth from a circulating library. She had a book in each hand ; they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers. From that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress.

Mrs. M. Those are vile places, indeed !

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge. It blossoms through the year ; and depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs. M. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony! You surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs. M. Observe me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or Algebra, or Simony, or Fluxions, or Paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning; nor will it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments; but, Sir Anthony, I would send her at nine years old to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts, and as she grew up I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; above all, she would be taught orthodoxy. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know, and I don't think there's a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you. But to the more important point in debate—you say you have no objection to my proposal.

Mrs. M. None, I assure you.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs. M. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection! let him object if he dare. No, no, Mrs. Malaprop; Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly. My process was always very simple: in his younger days, 'twas "Jack, do this;" if he demurred I knocked him down; and if he grumbled at that I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs. M. Ay, and the properest way, o' my conscience ! Nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity. Well, Sir Anthony, I shall prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations ; and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently. I must leave you ; and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl ; take my advice, keep a tight hand ; if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key ; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about. [Exit SIR ANTHONY.

Mrs. M. Well, at any rate, I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. [Exit Mrs. MALAPROP

CHILDREN'S PLAYS.



CAST AWAY!

A NAUTICAL DRAMA.

IN THREE ACTS.

CHARACTERS.

ALFRED.

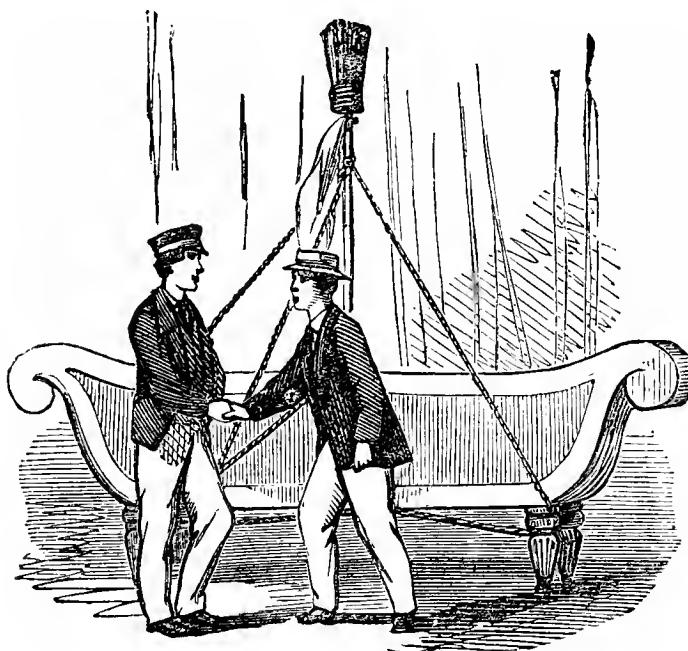
HARRY.

GUS.

GEORGE.

JAMIE.

EMMY. *Harry's Sister.*



ACT I.

SCENE—*The shore near Whitehaven at low water. TIME—Morning. A small yacht at the back. MUSIC—“Jack Robinson.”*

Enter ALFRED and HARRY.

Harry. Let us rest a short time, Alfred. I'm tired.

Alf. What, tired already? What a fellow you are to be so soon tired!

Harry. Remember, I'm not so strong as you. I've not long got over my illness.

Alf. Ah! I forgot that—that was the time that your little sister, Emmy, was so good to you.

Harry. Yes, she was, indeed; but everybody was good to me. My papa, mamma, and you, old chap. (*Taking his hand.*)

Alf. Oh, never mind me!

Harry. But you were very good, and I *will* tell you of it—so was Gus.

Alf. Gus! Why, I thought that he cared for nothing but eating!

Harry. Ah! but he does though. There are many worse fellows than Gus. Here he comes.

Enter Gus—a crab in his hand.

Gus. Oh, look what I've found!

Harry and } Alf. *(Looking eagerly.)* What! what!

Gus. A crab!

Alf. Where did you find it?

Gus. Among the rocks on the north sands. I was mussel-hunting, and periwinkling, and picking up anything that I could lay hold of, when I saw this fellow walking about as if he had lost his way and couldn't find it again; so I popped pounce on him, and here he is!

Harry. And what are you going to do with him?

Gus. Do with him? Eat him!

Alf. But you'll boil him first, won't you?

Gus. Well, I don't know! Is that the regular thing?

Alf. Of course it is!

Gus. Are you sure? They eat raw oysters, why not raw crabs?

Alf. I say, boys, here's Mr. Carstine's yacht, the *Albatross*. He told me that I might go aboard her when I liked. Suppose we go now, there's nobody in her. We can easily climb up, and then drop down again when the tide turns. It is just about low-water now.

Harry. I'd rather not—though Mr. Carstine has often asked me.

Alf. Why not?

Harry. Because mamma made me promise her never to go upon the water without her knowledge

Alf. What do you say, Gus?

Gus. I don't know. Has he got any stores on board?

Alf. He always keeps lots of eatables and drinkables. There's a nice little galley, and kettles, and saucepans.

Gus. Saucepans! Suppose we boil my crab, then.

Alf. Huzza, so we will. I can light a fire. Come, Harry.

Harry. No. I can't climb about and all that. You are as strong as a lion. I am not. Besides, I think it is going to rain.

Alf. Not it. Come along.

Gus. I wonder if I were to keep this crab, and feed him upon little fishes, whether he would grow bigger

Alf. Why of course he would.

Gus. I've a good mind. Perhaps in time it would get to know me, and follow me about like a dog?

Harry. Ah, Gus! No crab will ever be so fond of you as you are of crab.

Emmy (without). "Harry, Harry!"

Harry. Here's my sister! [EMMY runs on.

Harry. Why, Emmy, what makes you run so?

Emmy. I saw you down here from the top of the cliff, so I came to tell you (*out of breath*) that papa has had a letter from George.

Harry. From my brother?

Alf. What, the brother who is a sailor?

Emmy. Yes ; and he is quite well, and coming home. He'll be at home to-night ; and he has had—that is, his ship has had—an action with a slaver off the Gold Coast, and there were more than three hundred negroes on board her. That's the ship. Poor things ! And they fought, and George is to be made a lieutenant when he gets home.

Harry. Three cheers for George !

[*Boys shout, Gus slyly puts the crab into Emmy's hand—she screams and is frightened.*]

Emmy. Oh, you silly thing ! What did you do that for ?

Alf. Where was the action fought ?

Emmy. Off the Gold Coast.

Gus. That's where they find turtle, isn't it ? Robinson Crusoe was very fond of turtle's eggs ! I should like to taste turtle's eggs !

Emmy. And mamma is going to give a party on account of this good news—and the invitations are sent out.

Harry. For when ?

Emmy. For this evening ; and you are asked, Alfred, and so are you. (*To Gus.*)

Gus. Am I ? Will there be custards ?

Emmy. You must ask our cook.

Gus. Boys, I've an idea ! Suppose Emmy comes on board with us, and shows us how to cook my crab ?

Alf. Hurray—the very thing ! Come on, Harry. You can't refuse now. We'll stay an hour, then go home to dress. We have plenty of time.

Harry. But I don't like.

Alf. Nonsense. Your brother a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and you afraid to go aboard a boat !

Harry. No, I'm not afraid.

Emmy. What, are you going into Mr. Carstine's yacht ?

Alf. Will you not come with us ?

Gus. To cook my crab.

Emmy. I don't care, if Harry's with me.

Alf. There. (*To Harry.*) Come round the other side,

there's a rope there. I'll swarm up, and then throw down the rope-ladder. It will be capital fun. Come and we'll drink the health of your brother.

Gus. In ginger-pop, if we can find any.

Alf. I know where Mr. Carstine keeps his keys. Come, don't be afraid. (*Sings.*)

Rule, Britannia !

Britannia rules the waves !

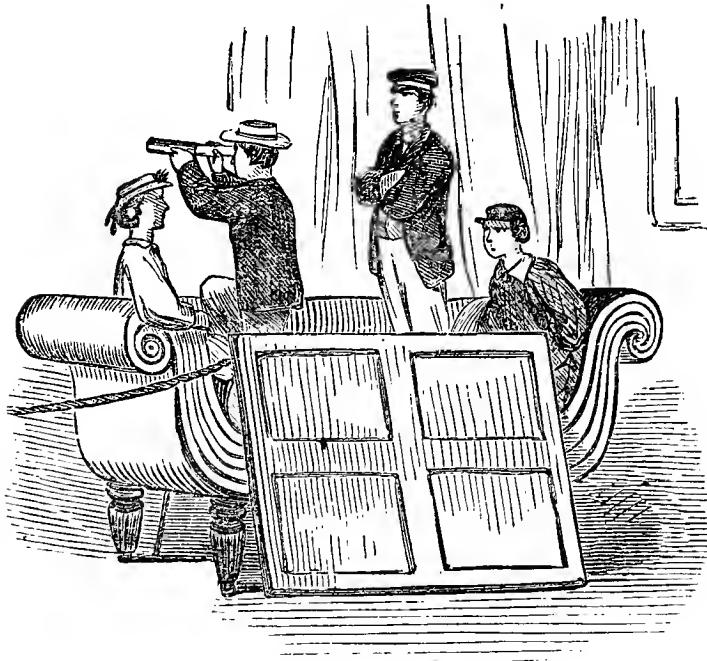
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves !

[*They all sing*

“ Rule, Britannia ! Britannia rules the waves !

Britons never, never, never shall be slaves !”

[*They go behind the yacht singing.*



ACT II.

Deck of the Yacht. Doors of Cabin. o.

Alf. Now let us play at sailors properly. *Gus!*

Gus. Hullo !

Alf. You mustn't say "Hullo!" You must say "Ay, ay, sir."

Gus. (Imitating.) Ay, ay, sir.

Alf. That's right. Now let us elect our Captain! There are three of us.

Harry. Four. (*Pointing to Emmy.*)

Alf. Girls don't count. She must be the supercargo, or the Captain's wife.

Emmy. Oh, yes; I'll be the Captain's wife.

Alf. Of course you shall. Then you won't have to help to work the ship!

Gus. Won't she? Then I'll be the Captain's wife!

Alf. Hold your tongue. Now, boys, whom do you elect for Captain?

Harry. I vote Alfred for Captain!

Gus. I second that vote!

Emmy. And I third it!

Gus. Girls don't have votes. I heard papa say that women never ought to have.

Emmy. Indeed! Pray, why not?

Gus. Because you are not Lords of the Creation.

Emmy. Who are Lords of the Creation, then?

Gus. We are! (*Very bumptiously.*)

Alf. (Authoritatively.) Silence on deck! My gallant crew, elected by your unanimous voice to the proud position of your Captain, it becomes my duty to see that all things aboard are put in proper trim. Harry!

Harry. Ay, ay, sir.

Alf. I appoint you to be the starboard watch.

Harry. Ay, ay, sir.

Emmy. Oh! what fun!

Alf. Gus!

Gus. Ay, ay, sir.

Alf. I appoint you to be the larboard watch!

Gus. I'd rather be cook!

Alf. Silence, sir; no mutiny, or I'll have you put in

irons! (*Pulls out a whistle and sounds it.*) Now to your duties!

Harry. What are they?

Alf. Starboard watch, to the look-out: report if there are any strange sail!

[*HARRY takes telescope and looks over bulwarks.*

Alf. Larboard watch!

Gus. Larboard watch is looking for his crab, and can't find it anywhere. (*Looking about.*)

Alf. Don't answer your Captain in that disrespectful way, sir. Come here.

Gus. I sha'n't. (*Sitting down resolutely.*)

Alf. I say, come here.

Gus. I say I sha'n't. (*Jumping up suddenly.*) Oh!

Alf. What's the matter?

Gus. I sat down upon the crab! I forgot I'd put him there.

Alf. Serve you right.

Harry. Sail on the larboard bow!

Alf. What do you make her out?

Harry. Two-masted brig—most likely a collier.

Alf. Larboard watch, here are the keys of the cabin!

Emmy. Where did you get them?

Alf. Mr. Carstine showed me the place where he always hides them. Larboard watch, open the cabin door; and then sweep the cabin out.

Gus. I sha'n't.

Alf. What, mutiny! (*Whistles.*) Turn up the hands for punishment! Harry, you be the marines, and march aft. (*HARRY does so.*) (*To Gus.*) Now, sir, return to your duty, or I'll hang you up at the yardarm!

Emmy. (*Kneeling to ALFRED.*) Mercy, Captain, mercy!

Alf. This is no scene for women! Retire into the cabin, madam! Now, sir, once for all, will you obey my orders?

Gus. No! I won't.

Alf. Then I'll put you in irons. (*To HARRY.*) Seize him
[ALFRED and HARRY seize GUS and force him to the mast.

Alf. Tie him up!

Emmy. Oh! what fun!

Gus. Is it, though?

Harry. What are we to tie him with?

Alf. Hold him. I'll find a piece of rope.

[ALFRED looks for rope : GUS struggles with HARRY : ALFRED takes out his knife, and, unthinkingly, cuts the rope that moors the yacht to the shore. The yacht gradually gets out to sea. MUSIC (piano)—“The Bay of Biscay!”]

Emmy. Oh, dear! don't the ship rock a little?

Alf. (*Fastening GUS.*) Now then, sir, I'll teach you to mutiny. I'll put you in irons till we reach port, and then have you tried by a court-martial.

Gus. sings :—

A stands for the Admiral, who's going me to try,
And B stands for the Boatswain, who's to flog me by-and-by ;
C stands for the Captain, whose word on deck is law,
And D stands for the Duty we to Queen and country swore.
So listen to me, messmates all,
While the anchor is a-trip ;
This life is but an ocean,
And the world is but a ship.

[During this ALFRED has brought a bottle of wine and some glasses from the cabin.

Alf. Bravo! Pipe all hands to splice the main brace. (*Whistles.*) Grog for the starboard-watch. (*Giving it to HARRY.*)

Gus. And grog for the larboard watch!

Alf. Your grog is stopped; but go on with your song.

Gus. No, if you stop my grog I shall stop my song!

Emmy. Please give him some, Captain.

Alf. There, then. (*Giving him some.*) Now go on.

Gus. (Sings.)

E stands for the East Wind, so dangerous they say,
And F stands for the Forec'sle, where to hear is to obey;
G stands for the Gangway, which we pass when going to shore,
And H stands for the Honour, whieh we gain in time of war.

So listen to me, messmates all,
While the anehor is atrip;
This life is but an ocean,
And the world is but a ship !

CHORUS.

[*They all sing the chorus.*

Emmy. How the boat rocks ! Isn't it time to get home to dress for the party this evening ?

Alf. Ay, it must be ; the tide must have turned by this time. (*Looking round.*) Eh ! Good gracious ! Why, we're out at sea ! [*They all start to their feet, and scream.*

[*Music (piano) to the end of scene.*

Harry. How can that be ?

Alf. In my hurry I cut the rope that fastened the vessel to the post.

Gus. Oh, dear ! oh, dear ! oh, dear !

Emmy. My dear mamma ! my dear papa ! Shall I never see you again ? (*Crying.*)

[*Thunder heard. It gets darker.*

Emmy. My dear—dear brother, we'll go down together !

Harry. My dear Emmy ! This is my fault.

Emmy. Don't say that, Harry.

Harry. It was very wrong of me to forget mamma's instructions !

Gus. Oh, dear, I'm getting so hungry !

Emmy. And we were to have had such a nice party this evening. Oh ! what will papa and mamma think ?

Alf. It was I who brought you into this trouble. I'll try and get you out of it ! Let's hoist a signal of distress and fire the gun. Don't give way, Emmy !

Emmy. Oh, I am so frightened!

[*It gets much darker. Thunder loud. Music becomes forte.*

Harry. (*Waving handkerchief towards shore.*) I can see boats putting off from the shore—at least I think I can! Give me the glass. [*It is now quite dark.*

Emmy. Ah, my dear brother! We shall be drowned—I know we shall! Oh, my poor papa!—my poor mamma!

Harry. It is quite dark, and we are drifting—we know not whither!

Alf. Pluck up a spirit, Hal. All may yet go well. Some vessel may pass me—

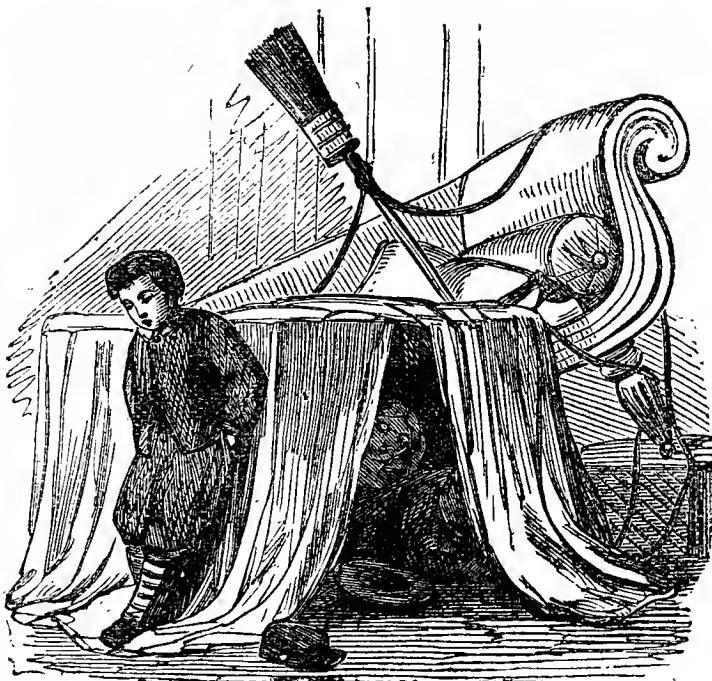
Gus. Or run into us!

Alf. The boats may reach us! If it wasn't so horribly dark—

[*A violent noise is heard. They all stagger. Thunder.*

Alf. We have struck upon a rock.

[**MUSIC—*Fortissimo.*** *They all crowd together, embracing.*



ACT III.

A bleak and barren coast. The vessel in the background, waterlogged. Cave, R. H. Sea at back. Time—Morning. Noise of sea, &c. HARRY and EMMY discovered asleep in cave. GUS, standing as sentry, fast asleep. MUSIC, “By the sad sea waves.”

Alf. (Without.) Sentry, ahoy! (*Enters, a bag on his shoulder.*) Why, Gus, sentry! you're asleep on your post!

Gus. (Still sleeping.) Thank you; no more roast; but I'll take another tart.

Alf. Wake up! (Waking him.)

Gus. (Awaking.) Eh? oh, dear, where am I? On a desolate island somewhere in Africa—isn't it, Alf?

Alf. I don't know where we are. Anything happened since I've been away?

Gus. No, nothing.

Alf. How are they ? (*Pointing to the cave.*)

Gus. Fast asleep.

Alf. I feel very wretched when I think of them. Poor little Emmy ! and Harry, who has just recovered from his illness. When the ship struck on the rock there, and we fancied we were all going down, I thought more of them than of myself, and Harry thought more of his sister than himself, I know ; and you—

Gus. Well, I own I thought more of myself than anybody else. But what a capital plan it was of you to lower yourself on shore by a rope, and then make it fast, so that we all could climb to land.

Alf. Yes, you all behaved bravely, nobly, especially poor Emmy.

Gus. And poor Gus, too. Oh ! I'm so jolly hungry.

Alf. (*Opening bag and showing ship's biscuits*) Here's stowage for the bread room.

Gus. Where did you get them ? (*Eagerly.*)

Alf. Why you don't suppose they grow on the trees, do you ?

Gus. Why not ? We're on an uninhabited island. You've heard of the bread-fruit—why not the biscuit-fruit, or the gingerbread-cake tree ? (*Feeling ALFRED's clothes.*) But you're quite wet.

Alf. Yes, at sunrise I swam to the vessel, got up the sides by a rope that was hanging over, and inspected the stores. Nothing has been spoilt. The salt water hasn't reached the lockers, I could only bring these—the difficulty was to get them ashore without wetting and spoiling them with sea-water.

Gus. How did you manage that ?

Alf. I threw overboard a loose spar, then jumped on it, taking care to keep the biscuit-bag out of the water, and paddled with my legs to land.

Gus. Bravo, Alf! You'll make a first-rate sailor; but what did you find in the locker?

Alf. Oh, two hams, a lot of salt beef, a large cheese, several bottles of pickles, some pots of jam and marmalade, two or three dozen of wine, and some porter.

Gus. Huzza! Why it's just like Robinson Crusoe going aboard the ship with his raft.

[*HARRY and EMMY wake up and come from cave.*

Emmy. Oh, my dear brother! I was just dreaming of poor papa and mamma.

Harry. How are you this morning, Emmy?

Emmy. I don't feel very well; but I shall be better—

Gus. For your breakfast! Of course you will—and here it is!

Harry. Biscuits!

Alf. Yes. I got 'em from the ship. I shall swim to her again; there are heaps of things on board will be useful. Now let us pipe to breakfast. (*Going to whistle.*)

Emmy. Don't—perhaps it might bring the savages down upon us.

Gus. (Alarmed.) Oh, ay. There always are savages on an uninhabited island, and perhaps they'll eat us, as they did that other great navigator, Captain Cook. [*They eat.*]

Alf. Don't be afraid. British sailors never are afraid.

Harry. Consider how good Providence has been to us in sparing our lives!

Emmy. And in casting the vessel on the shore, so that what is in it may be of service to us!

Gus. And in not spoiling the eatables in the locker!

Emmy. I'm so thirsty.

[*HARRY and ALFRED look at each other.*

Gus. Thirsty!—here is lots of water! (*Goes to sea, and takes up some in his hand, and tastes it.* Oh, how salt and nasty!)

Alf. There's a barrel of water in the vessel, but I couldn't get it to shore. But, of course, there's water here, upon the island, or whatever it is. We must go a mile or so inland.

Harry. I'll go.

Alf. No; you must remain here, and take care of your sister. *Gus!*

Gus. Ay, ay, sir.

Alf. You must go.

Gus. What, go inland, and let the savages make a meat-pie of me! No, I wont!

Alf. But you must.

Gus. Why can't you go?

Alf. I'm going aboard to make a raft, and bring off all the provisions, in case the ship should break up, and we should lose them.

Gus. Well, wait till you come back, then you can go yourself.

Alf. Gus, I know you're a good-hearted fellow, in spite of your funny ways. Look at that poor girl, nearly fainting for a drop of water. Wont you try and find it for her, even at some little risk? I'm sure you will, for you are not a coward.

Gus. A coward! I should think not! I'll go, *Alf.*

Alf. That's a good fellow.

Gus. But what am I to bring it in? I can't carry a quart of water in my pockets!

Alf. (*Looking round.*) What are you to bring it in? (*A small bucket, or keg, is thrown upon the shore by the motion of the sea.* *ALFRED takes it up.*) This!

Gus. Capital! It came just in time.

Harry. Where are you going?

Emmy. Oh! don't leave us.

Alf. Gus is going to fetch some water. Carry the bucket on a stick, *Gus*. You have your knife, and can cut one from the trees there. I'm going to fetch some more things from the vessel.

Emmy. Pray take care of yourself, Alfred ; we couldn't get on without you.

Alf. All right ! we shall weather through this, depend upon it ! Some vessel must pass. I'll hoist the Jack upside down as a signal of distress, and they'll take us off. Away with you, Gus.

[ALFRED goes off L.H.]

Gus. (*Takes out his knife and takes up the bucket.*) If any savages come across me, it shall be cut and come again. Oh ! dear, what a weight this bucket is. (*Sings.*)

A stands for the Appetite I've got, though nought to eat,
And B stands for the Banyan-day without a bit of meat;
C stands for the Courage, that with savages dare row,
And D stands for the Damp and Dirt I pick my way through now.

[Gus goes off R.H.]

Harry. Come, my dear sister, bear up.

Emmy. I do try to bear up, Harry, dear. I don't care for myself so much, but when I think of the anxiety of poor mamma and papa—bless them ! They would wait for us at the party, and (*bursts into tears*) perhaps we shall never see them more !

Harry. And all because I did not regard my mother's strict injunctions never to go upon the water without her knowledge. It is my fault, Emmy.

Emmy. I didn't mean to reproach you, Harry, dear. Oh ! I wish I knew where we are. Do you ?

Harry. I've no idea.

Emmy. Are we in Africa ?

Harry. I think not, it's so cool ; besides, I see no date or palm trees.

Emmy. (*Looking off L.*) Oh ! I can see Alfred swimming near the ship. Look, he has caught hold of a rope ! Doesn't he swim nicely ?

Harry. He does, indeed. Now he's swarming up the sides of the yacht ! Poor Mr. Carstine will wonder what has become of it

Emmy. Oh ! I am so thirsty.

Gus. (*Without.*) "Ship's crew, ahoy !"

Harry. Here's Gus.

Enter Gus, carrying a bucketful of water, three long sticks, and a hare.

Gus. Come and help us here.

[They relieve him of his burden, and drink out of the palms of their hands. Gus retains the hare.]

Harry. This is delicious, isn't it, Emmy?

Emmy. Beautiful! (Drinking.)

Harry. You found it very soon, Gus.

Gus. Yes; there's a nice clear spring running a few yards off. I didn't see any savages; but just as I'd filled my bucket, I saw this fellow sitting close to me. I'd cut this stick as I went. So I fetched him a crack, killed him, and brought it with me.

Harry. What is it?

Emmy. Per'aps a young lion, and the lioness will be coming after it. (Frightened)

Gus. Lion—not it. It's a hare!

Harry and Emmy. (Together.) A hare.

Gus. Yes, don't you see it is? Ain't I lucky? At home I found a crab, and here I find a hare.

Harry. But what shall we do with it?

Gus. Do with it? Eat it!

Emmy. But how are you to cook it?

Gus. Cook it?

Emmy. Yes; you can't eat it raw.

Gus. I never thought of that!

Alf. (Outside.) "Island ahoy! Come and help me here!"

Emmy. Oh! look at Alfred.

Harry. Why, he's on a raft.

Gus. And what lots of things he has got out of the ship!

[*Gus and Harry and Emmy run off and immediately return, carrying various articles.*]

Emmy. Oh ! Alfred, how good of you !

Alf. There are lots more to fetch yet.

[*They go off and bring them on.*

Alf. Now let's count our stores. There is a ham and a piece of junk, and wine and bottled ale. Three bottles—five bottles.

Emmy. And Gus brought us water.

Harry. And found a hare.

Gus. (*Entering with saucepan and kettle.*) And he's now got a saucepan to cook it in.

Alf. And here are three pots of marmalade and one of—

Gus. (*Snatching it and reading label.*) Currant jelly for the hare—they always have currant jelly to hare. Now, look here. Harry, get some sticks.

[*Gus ties the three long sticks together and slings the saucepan on them, so as to make a Gipsy fireplace.*

HARRY gets sticks and puts them underneath the saucepan.

Emmy. But how are we to light a fire ?

Alf. (*Bringing a box of lucifers wrapped in canvas out of his pocket.*) I didn't forget them.

[*They put water and beef in saucepan and light the fire.*

This can be done by placing a piece of sheet-iron on the floor.

Gus. We shall have a jolly dinner, and marmalade on biscuit will do instead of pudding.

Alf. And see here, Gus ; on deck I found your crab. (*Producing it.*)

Gus. Oh, you old beauty ! How glad am I to see you again. (*Puts him in saucepan.*) Boil away—you'll make a first course of fish !

Alf. Now, Gus, you must go back on the raft with me, and help me to get out more stores !

Gus. What, before dinner ?

Alf. Yes, while the tide serves ; we shan't be long. Harry and Emmy will cook the dinner while we're away.

Gus. And when I come back I'll construct a roasting-jack to roast my hare.

[*Gus and ALFRED go off L.H. HARRY and EMMY arrange the things.*

Harry. How are you getting on, Emmy ?

Emmy. Oh ! capitally. It's very good fun, isn't it ? It's just like a picnic on the sands. [They attend to fire, &c.

[*Three or four ragged shock-headed boys enter and survey the cooking with wonder. EMMY sees them, and shrieks.*

Emmy. (Clinging to Harry.) Oh, Harry ! look !—the savages !

1st Boy. Hech, Sandy, wha are these ? It's an unco' nice smell. Gie us a wee bittie !

[*The boys advance to saucepan—HARRY stops them.*

Harry. No, it's ours, not yours—and you shan't touch it.

1st Boy. Hech ! but we wull. There are mair on us than o' ye—Sandy, Donald, callants, tak it awa' frae them ! We'll hae it a'.

[*HARRY fights three of the boys with his stick ; the other seizes EMMY, who screams loudly, as HARRY is getting the worst of it. A shot is heard outside—the strange boys are frightened. ALFRED and GUS run on and beat them off. GUS covers one boy's head with a keg, and keeps him prisoner; the others run off.*

Gus. Huzza ! I've caught a native ! (To the boy, who kicks.) Be quiet, sir, or I'll pop you in the saucepan and boil you ! (Boy in awful agony.)

Emmy. (Embracing Harry.) Oh ! I am so frightened !

Gus. You see there are savages on the island !

Harry. Who fired the shot ?

Alf. I did. I found Mr. Carstine's gun in the cabin, and I thought it would be useful to shoot birds with.

Gus. Let me tie up my prisoner!

[*Ties boy up with rope—boy roaring out.*

Emmy. But how did you know we were attacked?

Alf. We saw it just as we were shoving off, and returned to rescue you. Bravo, Harry; you fought like a lion!

Gus. What's your name, you villain?

Boy. Jamie Tillietoddletikes, sir.

Gus. There's a savage name for you! Recollect henceforth that you are my slave, and I shall call you Friday. Do you hear?

Boy. Ay, sir. [MUSIC (piano)—“*Home, sweet Home!*”

Alf. (Atback.) A sail! A sail!

[*They all wave handkerchiefs to it.*

Gus. Get up and wave a handkerchief, you cannibal, or I'll make marmalade of you!

Boy. I hanna got one!

Gus. He hasn't got a handkerchief—the vulgar little boy! Then wave your cap. Do you hear, Friday? Wave your cap. (Boy does so.)

Emmy. See, there's a little boat coming!

Alf. We're saved! Huzza! (All shout.)

Gus. Shout, Friday, or I'll cut your head off!

Boy. (Ruefully.) Huzza!

Emmy. (Embracing her brother.) Oh, dear Harry, we shall see papa and mamma again!

George. (Without.) Hollo! you there. Shore, ahoy!

Emmy. Why, it's brother George's voice!

Harry. And it is brother George himself! (Looking L.)

Alf. What, the sailor?

Gus. Huzza! Shout, Friday, shout! (Boy shouts.)

Enter GEORGE, L. H. HARRY and EMMY run to him.

Harry and Emmy. Oh, George—my dear George!

George. My dear brother and sister!

Harry. How did you find us out? And why are you here?

George. I got into Whitehaven by the evening train, as I said I should in my letter. I found all at home in sad distress. Jack Godfrey lent me his yacht, and Carstine came with me. I was afraid you would come to grief on shore. Carstine saw his yacht on the rocks here, and we heard a shot, so we came off in a boat to see if it were really you.

Emmy. How is poor mamma?

Harry. And papa?

George. Very much distressed about you, you may be sure. Thank goodness we've found you!

Alf. And where have we been blown to, Mister George?

George. On to the coast of Scotland, about fifty miles from home—and a very dangerous coast too, let me tell you. Who is that? (*Seeing boy bound.*)

Gus. (*Who is eating marmalade.*) My man Friday; my prisoner. But I suppose he is a Scotchman, and we took him for a savage. Why didn't you say you were a Scotchman? I suppose I must let you go. (*Unties him.*) There, you may take the pot as your share of the booty. (*Gives him empty marmalade pot.*)

George. And there is half-a-crown for your ill-treatment. Run away. (*Boy runs off R. H.*) Now come into the boat, and we'll steer for home.

All. Home! Huzza!

George. You have been very fortunate to have escaped with your lives. I hope it will be a warning to you for the future.

Harry. What will papa say?

George. Why, he is sure to be cross, of course; and he'll have to pay Carstine for the loss of his yacht.

Alf. My papa will bear his share, I'm sure.

Gus. And so will mine.

George. Thank goodness, you have been mercifully spared!

Now for the boat; and, remember, no more playing at sailors.

MUSIC—“*Far, far upon the Sea.*”

[As few things in this world possess less similarity to a small yacht and a desolate shore than a comfortably furnished room, our juvenile friends, the performers of the characters in “Cast Away,” must be kind enough to exercise their powers of imagination as well as ingenuity.

In Act I., the room supposed to be the stage should be cleared of everything but the sofa, which should be turned with its back to the audience. By fastening a sweeping-brush, decorated with a flag, in its centre, and a couple of ropes from the top of the brush to the sides of the sofa, a resemblance to the hull, mast, and rigging of a small vessel will be obtained.

In Act II., the sofa, minus its mast and ropes, must be turned round and placed in the centre of the room, where it will represent the cushioned seats of the yacht; a shutter placed each side of the sofa will make excellent bulwarks, to which the rope that moors the yacht must be attached.

In Act III., the ever useful sofa must be again turned round and placed in a corner, with one end higher than the other, the mast and rigging lying in disorder: this will give the effect of a wrecked vessel. The cave can be constructed by covering a table with a green cloth, and arranging the folds of the cloth so as to hide the table legs.]

THE FOUR SEASONS.

[WHERE there is a family of juveniles this fable may be acted and rendered exceedingly interesting. Four of the members should represent the Four Seasons, and each appropriately make his entrance and speak his part. A fifth should personify the year 1865, and at the close of the speech of WINTER commence striking with a hammer on a bell the last hour of the old year, and, when completed, the whole should vanish and thus make a highly amusing domestic drama.]

'TWAS New Year's eve,—the night was cold,
And round the log-fire young and old
Were gathered, all in joyful mood,
To chant or list to carols good,
Which loud proclaimed the natal day
Of Him who died at Calvary.

The room was large, the lights were low,
But from the fire a ruddy glow
Of comfort came, and spread around
The walls, where dusky portraits frowned
Of grim old men, in antique garb,
With shaggy brow and pointed barb,
Who, in her day of darkness past,
For England bled and breathed their last.

The house itself had had its day,
And fast was falling to decay ;
But still it braved each winter's storm,
Still reared its rude and rugged form,
Slow to yield, though spent with time,
Like warrior stout, but past his prime.

The tale was told, the song was sung,
And round and round had gladness rung
From every throat, and every eye
Was beaming bright with ecstasy,
When lo ! the door was opened wide,
And, with an easy graceful glide,
A sprightly figure, young and fair,
And free from every sign of care,
Came wand'ring o'er the polished floor,
As light as breeze on sheltered shore
Of lonesome lake, in mountain land,
When gently fanned by Autumn's hand.

“Here I come, the bygone Spring !”
The figure cried, and with a swing
Upon his toes he turned him round,
And finished with an antic bound
High in the air, and all so light,
That one might think him made for flight
More than to tread the solid ground,
So airy was his ball-like bound !

“The Spring ! the Spring ! the bygone Spring
I am ! So shout my welcoming !
I've come to add unto thy mirth,
To help to cheer thy homely hearth,
And though I have awhile been dead,
Still does the myrtle crown my head,

Still do I wear some “cloth of green;”—
Though not so fair as once was seen,



Yet is it brighter than those blades
That live through all the Seasons' shades!—
Than Summer's gold, than Autumn's brown,
Than Winter, with his freezing frown,
I'm fairer far, though bygone Spring:
So shout me forth thy welcoming!"

The Four Seasons.

"Hold!" seemed to come from underground
To shake the mansion with its sound.



When, by the door, in yellow vest,
A man appearcd, and Spring addressed.
"I've heard thee praise thyself right well,
And of thy verdant vestments tell;
But thou art young, and, like all youth,
Art apt to go beyond the truth,
Not by design, but being new
To life, your words shinc as the dew

Upon the grass, in spangled rays,
 And brighten all in Fancy's gaze ;
 But still there's little solid there,—
 'Tis water with a borrowed glare !

“ Now I am Summer, dressed in gold,
 And though not young, I am not old ;
 Thou dost produce the tender shoots,
 But I them fill with swelling fruits ;
 Thou bloom'st with garments white and red,
 And freshest verdure crowns thy head ;
 Still thou art but the blossoming,—
 'Tis I deserve the welcoming !”

“ Stay ! stay !” a hearty voice exclaims,
 “ Stay, stay, I well know both your names,
 For I am Autumn !” cried a man,
 Ere he had entered, and began
 To blow a space, for he was stout,
 And of his breath run nearly out.
 “ I've heard you both, the first and last,
 And think you speak by far too fast.
 For Spring there's some excuse ; he's young
 And has, himself, from nothing sprung ;
 But thou !”—he said to Summer grave,
 “ He brought thee forth ; thee features gave,
 And though you took a larger form,
 He was of all thou art the germ ;
 And greatly it amazes me
 To hear thee so ungratefully
 Regard him in this presence good,
 And speak in such contemptuous mood !
 But if the truth must be here told,
 What are you both in green and gold ?
 You speak of Spring as of the ‘ shoots,’
 And of thyself as ‘ swelling fruits,’

But am not I the ripeness full,
In purple robed and beautiful?
The clust'ring grape that bends the vine,
The apple, pear, and plum are mine,
The field with yellow laden'd o'er
Of ripened ears, is of my store,



And what can Spring or you produce
Compared with these?"—

“A truce! a truce!

To all thy vaunting!” cries a voice
 That has a strange sepulchral noise;—
 Deep, dull, and hollow as the tone
 Of sullen winds that make their moan
 In savage caverns, grim and wild,
 Where light of day has never smiled.



“I’m old Winter, white with age!”
 A man said, and with step of sage

Walked in, and trembling on his staff,
Appeared as if he ne'er might laugh,
Whilst on his beard the frozen snow
Glanced in the log fire's rudely glow,
And round about his withered form,
Rough furs were wrapped to keep him warm.
"I've heard ye all!" he growled and coughed,
Whilst from his head his cap he doffed.
"And what I've heard is very good,
For all have helped to give me food :—
The Spring the goodly work began,
And Summer carried on the plan,
When Autumn came, and in the vale
Gave odours to the ripening gale,
And made all hearts on earth rejoice,
With the sweet sound of Plenty's voice.
Now I am come, though old and grave,
To thank you all for what you gave;



But to declare, that 'tis not well
For fleeting things to boast or swell
About the merits each possesses,—
Your green, your gold, your purple dresses,—
For, after all, the day shall come,
When each must pass into the tomb!"

These words the Sage had scarcely said,
When twelve o'clock, with stately tread,
Came, struck, and told that had begun
The year of Eighteen-sixty-one :
When, with the last, the Seasons flew
Away, and Sleep her curtain drew
Athwart the eyes of young and old,
Within that mansion's ample fold.

PROSERPINE.

PROSERPINE;

OR, STRIKING A MATCH.

A CLASSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA.

“A FEW WORDS,” BUT NO “ARGUMENT.”

WE do not intend to spoil our digestion by arguments of any kind; no, not even by those which may be of *playful description*. We are unspeakably glad to leave our production to speak for itself. Our classical readers will see at a glance what liberties we have taken with the Immortals; other classes of readers may either remain in ignorance of our offences, or may find us out by seeking our *characters* in the *livre noir* of some Detective Lemprière. If we have not made Pluto as black as he is generally painted, we have but erred on the side of charity. If we have done violence to any one else's conception of Ceres, we wish to excuse ourselves by saying that sensation is indispensable to the *serial* story. Should any take umbrage at the newsboy, and at other latter-day apparitions and allusions, we shall be grieved indeed. Nothing could possibly restore our self-complacency but a giving heed to that comforting internal whisper which suggests that, as poet chroniclers are, for the most part, neither full nor trustworthy, and that even “the oldest inhabitant” of the most longeuous American village was not, in the days of which we write, our own imagination may be boldly cited as powerful authority, should any rabid chronologist desire to snap us up on charge of anachronism. Surely we are on the verge of becoming argumentative! Let us save ourselves

from mendacity by wishing that all our readers who have not yet struck a good match, may *mate* with somebody with whom they will find pleasure in mating for a life.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PLUTO. *King of the Lower Regions, the classical Netherlands.*

MERCURY. *Messenger of the gods.*

ASCALAPHUS. *A friend of Pluto.*

BOY. *Nobody in particular.*

SLAVE. *Ditto, and perhaps identical, if the company be “limited.”*

PROSERPINE. *Daughter of Ceres, and thus in some measure “a child of Nature.”*

CERES. *Goddess of Agriculture; ergo, corn-producer, although no bootmaker.*

VENUS. *The belle of the Universe, &c., &c.*

MINERVA. *A blue-stockting.*

DIANA. *A fast young lady, given to hunting and other rapidities.*

ABETHUSA. *One of the Nereids.*

ACT I.—SCENE I.

The Interior of CERES' dwelling at Enna. CERES engaged in needlework; PROSERPINE yawning over a tapestry-frame.

Ceres. Gaping again, my dearest Proserpine?
 I've counted, and believe me, twenty-nine
 Times have you yawned since we've been sitting here.
 Restraine yourself; 'tis underbred, my dear.
 Besides, such constant stretching can but tend
 To spoil your mouth; and, Prossy, do not bend

Thus o'er that frame ; you're injuring your own.
Your back, flat as a pancake once, is grown
A trifle round. This atmosphere, I ween,
Is too relaxing—you must take quinine.

Pros. The atmosphere ? Oh, dear, *that 'air's* all right,
Might I but breathe it ; but from morn till night
Within these narrow walls you bid me hide,
When I would fain be wand'ring far and wide,
Like other girls. I long to pluck the flow'rs
On verdant meads, or pass the happy hours
By purling streams, whose limpid waters lave
The em'rald banks.

Ceres. Good gracious, child, you rave !
At morn the meadow grass would wet your feet,
Make you rheumatic ; and the noon tide heat
Would give you freckles ; whilst the dews of eve
Might cause I don't know what. I do believe
The dreadful things which Rowland says of spring
And all the other seasons, that they bring
Evils cutaneous. I think with awe
Of them, for here you can't get Kalydor.

Pros. Nonsense, mamma ; give the golosh its *duo*.
'Tis *dew-proof*.

Ceres. Well, my dear, I *do—Je dus*.

Pros. Indued with them, can't I then take a walk,
Duly protected 'gainst the damp ? You talk
Of freckles, and of *sundry* ills like those ;
I can have "uglies," sunshades, I suppose,
And *veils* which will *avail* against the sun ;
If not, *vale* to joy. Brown as a bun
I wish I were, so that adown the *vale*
I might disport myself. Oh ! I could weep and *wail*
At my sad lot. Complexion, thou art my bane !
Under restraint you place me, not insane !

AIR—“I'd choose to be a Daisy.”

I'd choose to be a brunette,
If I might change my skin;
And I wish I might: for pink and white
I do not care a pin.

Ceres. Now don't be silly, Pross: you're *blonde in type*.
Europe accords its praise; nay, Fame her pipe,
Trumpet, trombone, whate'er it be, has blown
Throughout the world in laudatory tone.

(*Slightly piqued.*) *Nigh aggravating* 'tis you don't enjoy
Your mother's company. You should employ
Yourself in needlework.

Pross. I'm tired of it.

Fun ambulatory I long for.

Ceres. Knit,
Net crochet, or make leather frames,
Potichomanie, Di—

Pross. Revolting names!
Your *Prossy pines*, but not for work—for play.
Ah! such a sight I saw the other day—
When you were napping in your easy chair,
The blind was raised—

Ceres. (*Starting.*) What, Prossy?

Pross. By the air;
So don't be angry, pray. And there went by
A happy troop of youths and maidens (ay,
Maidens as fair as lilies, though they wore
Nor hat nor bonnet, mother), and they bore
Garlands of fragrant flow'rs: they danced, they sang,
Until the hills with joy responsive rang.
Came there a rough place in the way, how glad,
Methought, the youths appeared; though each one had
To bear a maiden o'er, they did not mind,
I'm sure, the extra burden.

Ceres. (*Aside.*) Oh, that blind! that blind!

Pros. Down there beside the brook they sat, and I
Stood watching them. Mamma, I wonder why
One winsome stripling joined not in the play,
But led the fairest damsel far away ?
He'd pluck a flower, 'tis true, and so would she.
Such lovely flowers ! But then it seemed to me
They cared not for them. He would hold his prize
Quite absently, whilst in the maiden's eyes
He looked so long, so earnestly, I thought
That manners surely he had ne'er been taught.
And she would tear her blossom leaf from leaf,
Regardless of its beauty. Yet no grief
Deprived the twain of sense, or made them shun
The merry group, for oft they smiled ; this done,
The youth would whisper somewhat in her ear,
And she would blush. What was it, mother dear ?

Ceres. (*Testily, and off her guard.*) Nonsense, of course !
(*Recollects herself.*) Bless me ! how should I know ?
(*Aside.*) Stupid I was to let her catch me so.

Pros. *Nonsense !* How happy, then, they seemed to be !
I wish some youth would nonsense talk to me.

Ceres. And this is surely all ?

Pros. Not quite, mamma ;
The youth's red lips drew nearer hers, I saw,
And then—

Ceres. (*Quickly and anxiously.*) And then ?

Pros. You gave a fearful snore—
Awoke—the blind fell down—I saw no more.

Ceres. I do assure, you, Proserpine, I'm *ash*—(*Sneezes.*)

Pros. (*Aside.*) She *burns* with anger, then.

Ceres (*Resuming.*) Ashamed : the *lash*
(The figurative *lash*) of all my ire
Shall come upon you if, as I desire,

You do not quickly, miss, yourself behave.
Ne'er stare from windows, vulgar child—

Enter Slave, who presents a letter.

Well, slave?

Slave. A letter, madam.

[*Bows and exit.*]

Ceres. (*Tries in vain to read.*) Prossy, go, my dear,
And seek my spectacles, and bring them here.

[*Exit PROSERPINE.*]

Fond mother that I am, I cannot scold
Her as I ought. E'en now I long to fold
The naughty darling once more unto my arms.
Her curiosity renews alarms
I deemed extinct.

Long years ago her sire,
Yclept Jupiter, deserted me: so dire
The trouble was I went through after that,
I said (to speak the truth, I swore—that's flat)
My child should never, never, run
The risk of suffering what her ma had done.
I thought, "She'll ne'er be a deserted wife,
If she no husband have throughout her life.
And she no husband can have if I keep
Her close concealed, nor let a male eye peep
E'en at her little finger." 'Twas in vain.
Her beauty's known; she's sought with might and main.
Once on a time, by chance, a young man saw
My daughter, and proposed for her; but pshaw!
A pretty fellow for a son-in-law!
A travelling musician, whom men call
Apollo. No, that would not do at all.
A red-coat known as Mars, too, sought her hand.
I soon told him my mind, and left the land.
Settled at Enna, where, until this morn,
I've never happier been since I was born.
But now my fear's reviv'd: Where's Prossy now? (*She rises.*)
I feel "all-overish"—I can't tell how.

Proserpine.

SONG AND DANCE—“*The Cure.*”

O dear ! O my ! I'm so perplexed,
I don't know what to do,
To educate a daughter, *one*
Should know “a thing or two.”
It is too bad, I thought I had
For love found out a cure ;
But now I know how matters go,
I am not quite so sure
That it's a cure—O yes, a cure—
That it's a perfect cure ;
With my hoppity, kickity, high and low,
That it's a reg'lar cure.

Scene closes.

SCENE II.—*A room in the Palace of PLUTO. PLUTO and ASCALAPHUS seated by a table, on which are many things shocking to nephaliasts and antinicotians.*

Pluto. What horrible cigars ! I do declare
They are not fit to smoke. Here, you may share
This box, Ascalaphus, with whom you will ;
The things have made me absolutely ill.

Asc. Thanks ! With your leave I'll light one, gracious sire ;
Ill weeds but meet with their desert in fire.

Pluto. And then this nectar, too, is not the thing.
Tis wishy-washy stuff.

Asc. Pray let me ring
For more, my lord.

Pluto (sighing.) Oh, no ! I cannot drink—
I cannot eat.

Asc. You are not well, I think.

Pluto. Well, not exactly ; I had not a wink
Of sleep the whole night through.

Asc. How very sad !
Perhaps you supped heavily.

Pluto. Dear no ! I had

Scarce anything, though a *superb* set-out
There was to tempt my appetite.

Asc.

I doubt.

The threefold barking of your cur occurred
Too oft for peaceful sleep. Upon my word,
I'd hang him, and then tan his 'ide, that's flat.
I've often thought he'd make a famous mat.

Pluto. *Hide* perhaps do something *tantamount* to that,
If he were guilty in this *matter*. No,
It's not the dog which does disturbs me so. [Hesitates.]
Ascalaphus, I'm wounded.

Asc.

Wounded! where?

Pluto. Deep in my bosom—in my heart—just here.

(*Points to the place where the seat of the affections is popularly supposed to be.*)

I took a trip to earth the other day,
And met the stripling Cupid on my way.
He bore his bow and arrows, as you know,
He oftentimes does. We walked along, and so
Amusingly he talked and joked, that we
Passed soon, I scarce know how, to Sicily.
There we disguised ourselves, and joined a band
Of the fair youths and maidens of the land,
Who trod the flow'ry paths of Enna's plain,
When all at once I felt a sharpish pain
Just where my heart should be. I turned me round:
In *hearty* fits of laughter Cupid found.
“What have you done, you little wretch?” I cried.
“Nothing; I've only shot you,” he replied.
“I've used my bow and arrow, Dan Pluto,
That I may make you yon fair maiden's *beau.*”

Asc. The *beau*-ideal of impertinence,
He wounded you of malice, then, prepense?

Pluto. He did. I raised my eyes, and then I *saw*,
Out of a window look the fairest—pshaw!

Proserpine.

A lover's rhapsody, of course you know—
She is perfection's self, and here below
She must and shall descend to be my queen.

Asc. She'll be but proud to come, my liege, I ween.
Kings are not suitors ev'ry day. Her name
May I presume to ask?

Pluto. You may: the fame
Of her concealed beauty's not unknown
E'en in these regions: Proserpine—a bone
Of dire contention sev'ral months ago
'Twixt Mars and that young fellow, Apollo.

Asc. Ah! *you* will have no trouble, sire, I trow,
To make this "*bone*" your *rib*. You need but go
To Enna, show yourself, and she'll not fail
To listen with all favour to your tale;
Or, better still, send me aloft, and I
Will bring her down to you. Do let me try
My skill as deputy in making love
To a coy maiden of the world above.

Pluto. (*Dryly.*) Thank you, I'd rather not. I should
prefer
To do this business for myself, young sir.
(*Changing his tone.*) Ceres, the mother, has, I know, to-
day
Received a letter calling her away.
(A serious thing is that mamma, I own.)
To-morrow Proserpine will be alone.
A guinea to a gooseberry I bet
That I of my beloved a hearing get.

Asc. You cannot fail. All will well go.

Pluto. (*Suddenly, after being for some moments lost in
thought.*) Well, come,
I would forget Dame Ceres now; of wine
Pour out a cup. Let's drink to Proserpine. (*They rise.*)

Asc. To Proserpine! (*They drink.*)

Enter VENUS

Venus. Methinks you're merry here.

Pluto. I'd no idea your ladyship was near.

(*Aside*) What has she heard, I wonder?

Venus. I know that;
I also know, friend Pluto, what you're at.
You are in love again.

Pluto. Again?

Venus. Again.
If you are on your guard, I must speak plain.
You know you've often been in love before.
Why, of our sex you're an established bore.
No one will heed your suit or share your throne;
Though king, a bachelor you reign alone.
And now my son, all in his wanton play,
An arrow shot at you the other day.
(*Banteringly.*) You sigh for Proserpine; you'll never get her!
The 'cute young Prossy knows her value better.

Pluto. I'll prosecute her—

Venus. (Ironically.) Yes, of course you will!
You'll pay her clumsy compliments until
You make her hate you more and more.

Pluto. (Anxiously.) O tell
Me, Queen of Love, what I must do.

Venus. (Impatiently.) Well! well!
We'll think about it. (*She ponders.*) Is Dame Ceres out?

Pluto. (With some little exultation.) To-morrow she will
be from home, no doubt.

Venus. Ah! then I see my way. Suppose I go
To call on Proserpine?

Pluto. Oh! do do so.

Venus. I'll wile her forth to take a walk, maybe,
And when I leave her—

Pluto. (Interrupting.) Leave the rest to me.

Asc. Hail to thy genius, O Queen of Hearts!

Venus. Nay, *hail's* too cold for me ; 'twould spoil my *arts*.

Pluto. Wine ! Pour out wine ; let's drink again to her—

To Proserpine, my Queen ! (*He drinks.*)

Venus (*Echoing the words, and imitating the action.*) To her !

Asc. (*Ditto ditto.*) To her !

Scene closes.

SCENE III.—*Open country about Enna.* PROSERPINE, VENUS, MINERVA, and DIANA walking together.

Venus. The sun is hot ; come, let us all repose
Beneath the citron's shade.

Diana. All right ! here goes. (*They sit down.*)
We'll be the *sitter-ons* !

Venus. (*To Proserpine.*) You're tired—you're pale.

Min. She is indeed.

Diana. I recommend pale ale,
Plenty of air and exercise, cold bath,
No books, no writing. I declare a lath
Is absolutely stout eompared with you.

Venus. (*Lispings.*) *A lath !* it ith.

Min. Diana, how you do
Run on ! “No books, no writing !” Why, the child
Would die, I'm sure.

Diana. Minerva, “draw it mild,”
The *al-i-ment* if Proserpine will try, she
Will postpone that event to *sine die*.

Pros. I cannot tell you how this balmy air
Enchants my senses. Oh ! the earth is fair !
My gladsome heart in concord sweet doth thrill
With all the merry music of yon rill.
You know not how the songs of birds delight,
Or how I love each perfumed flow'ret bright

Which holds a tiny face for me to kiss.

Oh ! to have wasted all these days——

Min. (Interrupting.)

Well, Miss,

If you have wasted them, the more's the shame ;

Time is a precious gift, and you're to blame

If you have failed t' employ the precious hours

Which have been yours.

(*MINERVA looks self-satisfied, PROSERPINE uncomfortable.*)

Diana. (Aside) (A sermon, O ye powers !)

Methinks I'm rested now. I'll take a run.

Come you too, Proserpine ; we'll have some fun.

Just now I saw a hart go down to drink ;

Let's give it chase. (*She rises.*)

Min. She's better than I think ;

Such a pursuit were most unfeminine.

Venus. But when *hart's* spelt with *e*, I then opine
It is not deemed improper by our sex.

Diana. Such literary quibbles never vex
Me, easy-going soul, "chaste Dian," I
Would make the deer as *chased*, *my dears*. Good-by. [*Exit.*]

Venus. Away she *darts* heart-free as ever, though
My lady's seldom seen without a *bow*.

Min. Is she not "darter" of the self-same *mère*
Who calls Apollo's son ? And you're aware
He is termed "lord of the unerring bow."

So archer blood runs in her veins.

Venus. I know
An *archer* speech I never heard from you ;
For you to pun is really something new,
Though 'arrowing.'

Min. You're right. Those dreadful puns,
Which now-a-days are *beaten** out by tons,

* The original meaning of *to pun* was to pound or *beat*

But merit *punishment*. A *jeu de mot*,
Once in a way, is very well; but, oh!
To twist your mother tongue 's *un mauvais jeu*.

Venus. In which the *juniors* will indulge, though.

Min. True.

Venus. Well, now I'm cooler, I'll go and bathe my face
In the clear fount which springs forth near this place.

Placet? perhaps Proserpine will go with me.

(*Aside.*) If I can wile her thus, this snare may be
Called *gin-and-water*.

Min. Proserpine will stay
With me, I think, and, while you are away
Laving yourself, instructively we'll talk.

Venus. Then by your *lave*, I'm off to take a walk.
(*Aside*) Yet she shall leave the girl alone, I vow.
Pluto's approaching steeds I hear e'en now.
Wise as she is, when there is strife between us,
Minerva always must give in to Venus.

[*Exit.*]

Min. Prossy, I fear when you are left *alone*
You're *given* much to melancholy. Own
That the days seem long, and that your mind
Is restless too.

Pros. (*Passionately.*) Ay! restless as the wind.
When morning breaks, I wish that it were night;
When stars appear, I sigh for sunshine bright.
I long to spur the ling'ring hours.

Min. (*With righteous anger.*) I say!
Don't talk such rubbish, girl, to me, I pray!
Bless me! You must want physic. Look at me;
Entre nous, I'm twice as old you; you see
The time is never heavy on my hands,
Who am immortal, and the hour-glass sands
Fall surely fast enough for chits like you,
Who've lived so short a time. Why, all things new
Should be to you. How can you so soon tire

Of what you scarce have seen? (PROSERPINE gives an angry start.) Nay, don't take fire.

Pros. I do not "tire of what I scarce have seen;" But since we've lived at Enna I have been A prisoner in all but name, and so I'm enervated; need you wonder? No. I'm tired of knitting, netting, crochet; I Am tired of tatting, working tapestry, Of satin-stitch, of braiding, of guipure, And plain work in all branches can't endure; I'm tired of being lady-like, genteel, Refined, accomplished, "moulded," and I feel—

Min. (Interrupting.) Many wrong things, no doubt, which do deserve a Word from me. I'll give you it.

Venus. (Calling in the distance.) Minerva!

Pros. (Not objecting to a diversion.) List! some one calls.

Min. (Too much engrossed to have heard.) Nonsense! my dear. I say That woman's mission—

Venus. 'Nerva! here! This way.

VENUS comes into view, but still remains in the distance.

Min. Ah! it is Venus. (Raising her voice.) What is it you want?

Venus. Why, you.

Here's a most curious flower.

Min. (Contemptuously.) Pooh! pooh!

Venus. (Approaching.) I say there is, then; come and look at it.

Min. What is it like?

Venus. I can't describe a bit.

Min. Well, I will go this monstrous flower to see.

You, Proserpine, sit here and wait for me.

Venus. (Aside.) Ha! ha! my lady, though you're very wise,

I thus throw dust—that's *flow'r*—into your eyes.

[*Excunt VENUS and MINERVA.*]

Pros. (Rising.) I cannot wait. A lovely bud I see Tempts me to stray e'en from this fragrant tree.

(*She bends over the flowers.*) O sister flow'rs, let me amongst you play;

Teach me your language, tell me what you say When the soft breezes bend you to and fro, And make you kiss each other. I would know.

(*PLUTO approaches unperceived.*)

If when the joyous sun with golden beams Bids you awake at morn—

Pluto. Star of my dreams!

Pros. (Starting up.) Indeed, Sir! Who are you?

Pluto. Oh! don't you know?

AIR—“Old Bob Ridley.”

I am King Pluto, O!

I am King Pluto, O!

I am King Pluto, ho, hi, ho!

I am King Pluto, O!

[*PLUTO looks delighted with himself.*

Pros. (Aside.) He must be mad, or else he's had some wine.

PLUTO. (Drawing nearer to PROSERPINE, and taking hold of her hand.) I love you very much, dear Proserpine.

Pros. (Starting from him with an air of alarm.) I'll call my mother, sir.

Pluto. (Ironically.) O yes, no doubt.

She's not at home, nor “does she know you're out.”

But these two facts do not affect the case.

I love you all the same. Your lovely face,
Your silv'ry voice, your airy step.

[*She attempts to escape, but PLUTO holds her back.*
Don't go.

You'd like to take a ride with me, I know.

Pros. (Indignantly.) I'm sure I shouldn't. Hands off,
sir. I'll call
Minerva! Venus!! Dian!!! (*PLUTO attempts to capture
her hands.*)

Pluto. (Persuasively.) Now don't squall;
You'll crack that pretty voice which I admire.

Pros. Minerva! Venus!! Dian!!!

Pluto. (Somewhat angrily.) By the fire
Which burns within my kitchen grate below,
I wont put up with this; so now you know.
(*More calmly.*) Don't be so foolish. I have said I'm king.
In proof of it, see, here's the ring. (*Shows the signet.*)
My brougham waits close by; in it we'll ride
(If you, your crinoline, and I can get inside)
Off to my kingdom. We shall soon be there;
The road's down-hill. And you, surpassing fair,
Shall be my queen, I do proclaim, and share
The honours of my throne. A queen, my child!
Just think! The chance would send some maidens wild.

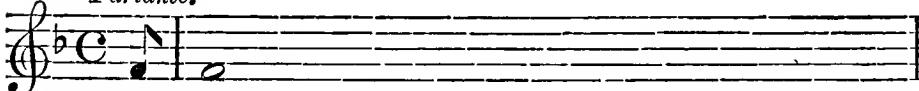
[*He goes out, dragging with him the reluctant PROSERPINE.*

Scene closes.

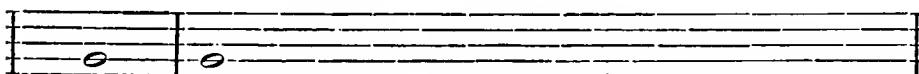
ACT II.

SCENE I.—“*Anywhere, everywhere, out in the world.*” Enter CERES, with dishevelled locks and travel-stained feet, and in general deshabille.

CERES.

HOOD’S “*Lost Child.*”*Parlante.*

“Oh! dear! Oh! dear! my heart will break, I shall go stick, stark, staring



wild! Has ever a one seen anything like a lost looking, crying child?”

Unhappy mother that I am, in vain
I’ve wandered far and wide in hope to gain
Some tidings of my daughter. She, alas!
Has left her home. I’ve sought her left and right;
I’ve sought her in the day and in the night;
I’ve sought her on the hills and on the plain,
In country, town, in street, square, alley, lane.
I’ve advertised; nay, more, I’ve had her cried
(I’ve cried myself), but tidings are denied.

Enter MERCURY, carrying a letter, the contents of which he is endeavouring to ascertain.

She’s gone for ever! Oh! she knows not how
Her mother loves her!

Mer. Heyday! what’s the row?

Ceres. (Seizing him by the arm.) Oh! have you seen my
daughter?

Mer. Bless me! how
The dickens can I tell? Pray what’s she like?

Ceres (*At a loss for a comparison.*) Oh!—like nothing—

Mer. Then she's a *pike*.

Culian young woman: an *odd fish*, in fact.

Ceres. She's fairer than the fairest.

Mer. (Pityingly, aside.) Poor thing, cracked

Ceres. This cloudless sky is less blue than her eyes; Her smile, in vain the midday sun it tries To emulate the brightness; then her hair Is liquid gold—I would you saw it!

Mer. (Sarcastically.) There, My good woman, that will do! I know “A mother thinks her own geese swans;” yet show To me the name this *rara avis* bears.

Ceres. 'Tis Proserpine.

Mer. What say you? Proserpine?

Ceres. Yes, Proserpine. Oh! have you seen her? Mine Be the endless task of thanking you, good sir, If you can give me any news of her.

Mer. I cannot.

Ceres. Oh! recall those words, I say.

Mer. Recall them, then. (*Aside.*) Cracked brains must have their way.

Ceres. Oh! do not trifle: dry a mother's tears.

Mer. (Aside.) She wants my pocket-handkerchief.

Ceres. My fears Are ever growing as the days pass by So slowly and so silently, whilst I Tramp weary miles and miles in hope to meet With Proserpine.

Mer. Indeed! “How's your poor feet?”

Ceres. The people all complain about the *corn*, Which I cannot attend to. Now, the horn Of plenty's far more ornament than use.

(*Angrily.*) I'm sick at heart, and nothing shall produce—

Mer. (Interrupting.) Don't swear, old lady.

Ceres. (Not heeding him.) On Siculum's ground,
An av'rage crop, until my child is found.

Mer. You 'ave some ground for rage, I grant you.

[He seems prepared to leave her.

Ceres.

Stay.

Mer. I can't—I must be off—good-by !

Ceres.

Nay, nay,

Do tell of my child.

Mer. Wait my return,
And then I may.

Ceres. I with impatience burn.

Mer. (Aside, as he is departing.) Well, if the daughter
do not burn also.

I bear a note from Jove to King Pluto.

And when I hold it up, and squeeze it so (*demonstration*),
I read a name beginning P.R.O.

And ending with N.E. I only know,
If I were long to stay in realms below,
I should be melted. (To CERES, who beckons to him.) Oh!
yes, *bientot.*

[Exit.

Enter a Boy with newspapers.

Boy. You buy a paper, ma'am? Look, here you are;
This one is *Hesperus, The Morning Star*.
If you would know "the time of day," *The Dial*
Will "put you up to it;" do give it trial.
There's wondrous news this morn. Or would you laugh,
Here's *Nectar* (sometimes *Punch*) for you to quaff.

Ceres. (Impatiently.) Boy, give me *Hesperus*, and leave
my sight.

Boy. (Respectfully.) The money, madam.

Ceres. (Handing it.) Here.

Boy. (Naturally and aside.) I thought she'd bite,
That's why I put my manners on.

[Exit.

Ceres. (With a despairing sigh, as she turns over the paper.) No light

Thrown by this *Star* on Proserpine, I see.

(Reads.) "Y. Z. is languishing for A. B. C.;"

'That's not my darling; "Lost, a bright idea;"'

Enter ARETHUSA.

"DISCORDIA's ANNUAL CONCERT;" nothing here;

"We hear from good authority"—Hullo!—

"That his Infernal Majesty Pluto

First met his fair young bride the other day

On certain plains no hundred miles away

From those of Enna." "Fair bride!" and "Enna!"

Yes, it must be she! (*She starts up, and begins to walk hurriedly away.*)

ARETHUSA. (Suddenly appearing before CERES.) Ceres, the tenor

Of your thoughts and way I know.

I heard you read: excuse me, do not go

Immediately to Hades.

Ceres. (Indignantly.) Who are you?
Such vile impertinence I never knew!
We've ne'er been introduced, I'm very sure,
And yet you use my name. I won't endure
Your meddling thus. What is your name?

Are. (With injured dignity.) I'm Arethusa, and I am to blame
That I have interfered.

Ceres. I think so too,
You "saucy Arethusa."

Are. (Slightly triumphant.) Yet I do
Know much about the one you seek. Good-by!

[*She feigns going away.*

Ceres. (Beseechingly.) Oh stay a moment, please, my dear,
I—I—

Are. (*Cruelly sarcastic.*) The “saucy Arethusa” does not dare
To change her mind again, or you’ll declare
She’s *see-saw* next.

Ceres. (*Quite humbled.*) Sweet girl, I won’t, I vow.

Are. (*Aside.*) She’s gentleness personified just now.
(*To CERES.*) Well, listen, then: your Prossy is below,
And, as you’ve guessed, the wife of King Pluto.

I saw her yestere’en.

Ceres. Oh happy eyes!

Are. Which? mine or hers? In hers the pearl-drops rise
That she no more can see the beauteous earth,
And that fair garden-land which gave her birth.

Ceres. Oh take me to her, Arethusa, pray!

Are. Now, don’t be weak.

Ceres. Weak! I would force my way
Through anything to reach my child! my child!

Are. (*Aside.*) A pretty business here—she’s going wild!

(*To CERES.*) Nay, “don’t give way” like that; just come,
Let’s talk the matter over o’er some tea.

I live hard by: the kettle, sure, must boil;
And minds are calmed by tea as seas by oil.

*The persuasive ARETHUSA and the agitated CERES form
a Tableau, and the SCENE closes.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Palace of PLUTO.*
PROSERPINE alone.

Pros. O for the world, the lightsome world above!
I mourn all day as might a cagèd dove.
This glitt’ring diadem which spans my brow,
I’d give it gladly if I could but now

Feel on my temples the Sicilian breeze.
 Ah ! I have fallen down upon my knees,
 And begged them bear me back to Enna's plain.
 But no ; my pray'rs, my tears are all in vain.
 They only tell me that a *crown* is mine
 If here I stay : as if I cared ! 'Tis fine.
 No doubt for children, when a tooth is drawn,
 To have *five shillings* for 't ; but I—I scorn
 Such paltry restitution, and I sigh
 For mother—home. Alas ! that I could die !
 The happy mortals oft make Death their friend,
 But we immortals never near the end.
 Some days it is since I was brought below,
 And nought I've eaten (I *am* hungry, though),
 Because I saw in dreams the other night,
 My tender mother ; * and she said, a bite
 Of any food injurious would prove,
 And only sever me from her I love.
 Impossible t'will be, I really fear,
 To starve myself much longer. (*Hears footsteps.*) Who comes
 here ?

Enter ASCALAPHUS, bearing a basket of beautiful pomegranates.†

Asc. Ascalaphus, your humble servant. I
 Have culled some pomegranates ; if, by-and-by,
 Your majesty will deign to taste the fruit,
 I think you'll find it nice.

Pros. Thank you, *sans doute*,
 But I am not allowed to eat such things.

Asc. Your *medico* is strict, is cruel. Kings

* We look for commendation from Mr. Howitt.

† Oranges and imagination will do as substitutes.

Proserpine.

And queens, your majesty, methought were free
From peptic disarrangements—worms like me
Are forced to suffer. (*Seeing Pros. fan herself.*)

It is warm to-day.

Pros. Warm ! is it ever other here ?

Asc. They say
Our climate's mild compared with higher lands.

Pros. (Aside.) Mild way of putting it !

(*To ASCAL.*) My face, my hands
Burn as though molten metal filled my veins.

Asc. On your parched lips, then, shower some luscious
rains
Of these pomegranates' treasure. (*He divides one.*) See the
juice !

How cool it looks. Proud it would be to dew
Such royal rosebuds. (*Seeing she rejects the proffered fruit.*)

Ah ! how I wish I knew
What you *would* take, straightway would I your hum—
(*Interrupted by a call from PLUTO.*)

Pluto. Ascalaphus !

Asc. His majesty ! (*To his invisible PLUTO.*)
I come !

(*To Pros.*) A moment, madame. I will soon return. [*Exit.*]

Pros. (Looking at the fruit with longing eyes.) But for
that dream, I'd eat. I burn ! I burn !

Delicious fruit ! see how the ruby shines !

(*Touches it.*) And then how cool it is. (*Listens and looks
round.*) There are no signs

Of anyone's approach. I cannot bear
To wait much longer. No one's looking. (*Tastes.*) There !

*Enter ASCALAPHUS, who observes the diminished pomegra-
nate, but does not appear to do so.*

Asc. His majesty desires to speak with you.

Pros. (Coolly.) I'm here,

Asc. (*Who doesn't understand such an answer.*) He's
the council-chamber.

Pros. Pooh!

Pray does he think that I am going to him?

Asc. Madam, I think he does.

Pros. (*Pertly.*) Indeed, no limb
Of mine shall move in his direction.

Asc. Then

I'll bear your majesty's reply. [*Exit*

Pros. (*Resignedly.*) Amen! (*She meditates.*)

PLUTO and ASCALAPHUS—*the former looking somewhat “put out”*—come in.

Pluto. A pretty temper yours is, madam.

Pros. (*Provokingly incredulous.*) Si?

Pluto. (*Who doesn't understand French.*) See?

Why, of course I can! It's plain to me

Your seeming amiability's vencer.

The common failing of your sex, my dear,

Is underneath; according to the song—

Pros. (*Aside, with wicked satire.*) Is't possible he sings?

Pluto. If I'm not wrong,

Thou'rt.

AIR—“*The Power of Love.*”

“ Vulture, thou, and dove;

Language cannot tell

Half thy pow'r, my love.”

Pros. Indeed, and is this all you wished to say?

Pluto. (*Rather sorry and subdued.*) Well, not exactly;
Mercury to-day

Has borne a note to me from your papa

(A child of Jupiter you know you are).

Pros. I am Jove's daughter.

Pluto. Yes, you are, by Jove.

(*Aside.*) This pa-in-law of standing's treasure-trove,

Proserpine.

An action for abduction hangs o'er me,
And he, the judge, is well-disposed, I see,
From what he says in this most precious note.

(*To PROSERPINE.*) My darling Proserpine, you know I dote
On you, whate'er I do to make you doubt,
When you—that's circumstances—"put me out,"
Shortly a common council will decide
If I am authorised to keep my bride.
I pray you hang by me.

Pros. (*With unseemly levity.*) Why, shall *you* hang ?
They're going to execute you, then ?

Pluto. (*In an injured tone.*) The fang
Of deadly serpent, Proserpine, had hurt me less
Than this unfitting joy.

Pros. (*Penitently.*) I do confess
'Twas wrong.

Pluto. (*With passion.*) Look on me, bride—and yet, nay,
do not look,
Lest, seeing, you should loathe me, when each nook
Of that fair world you know has better choice
Of lovers. Do but listen to my voice.
Hear how my love has tuned its harshness. Hear
How much it trembles, dear one, all for fear
You should not heed it. (*He takes PROSERPINE's hands in
his, and this time she does not resist.*) It was love alone
Which bore you hitherwards ; let love atone ;
And as by Hades' laws you are my wife,
Let them not part us, O, my own ! my life ! (*He looks
fondly and proudly upon her, and she not unkindly upon
him.*)

Scene closes.

SCENE III.—*Apartment in the palace of PLUTO. CERES and PROSERPINE in earnest conversation.*

Ceres. You saw me in your dream, my child?

Pros.

I did.

Ceres. And you obeyed me, Proserpine? I bid
You keep from food.

Pros. And so I have—at least
Whene'er my hus—(*CERES frowns*)—that's Pluto—bade me
feast,

I constantly said “No,” but yesterday,
Athirst, I took some pomegranate.

Ceres. (*In an agony.*) O say
That no one saw you!

Pros. Well, I think I may.
I was alone. (*Glances at her mother.*) Why, what's the
matter, ma?

Ceres. Oh! such a disobedient child you are.
Unless you keep the secret, ruin dire
Will fall on you and me.

Pros. May I inquire
How this will come to pass?

Ceres. (*Mysteriously.*) You'll know too soon.

Pros. My poor mamma! (*Aside.*) I guess it is full
moon,
She is so very odd. (*To CERES.*) I really strove
To starve myself.

Enter ASCALAPHUS.

Ascal. (*To PROSERPINE.*) Madam, the mighty Jove
Can't come in person to decide your case.

Ceres. I being here, he dares not show his face.

Asc. Much business in Olympus keeps him there.

Ceres. Or making love or fireworks,* I will swear.

Asc. But Pluto has a letter which will give
The Jupiterian verdict.

Ceres. As I live,
A pretty fellow to decide what's fair
In matters matrimonial—the bear !

Enter PLUTO, with a letter in his hand; CERES frowns at him; but PROSERPINE, unnoticed by her mother, favours him with something like a smile.

Pluto. I come, sweet wife.

Ceres. (Aside, sneeringly.) Sweet wife, indeed !

Pluto. To read.

Some Jovial news, I hope.

Pros. (With assumed coldness.) I give you heed.

Ceres. (Aside, delighted.) All right, don't give encouragement, that's all.

Be stiff as possible, if you would gall.

Pluto. (Reads.) "Dear Pluto, *inter nos*, I'm just engaged"—

Ceres. (Interrupting.) "Engaged!" he's married.

Pluto. (Glancing over what follows such a commencement.) "Better half"—um—"raged."

(To the listeners.) Ah ! this is private matter.

Ceres. (With irony.) Oh, no doubt.

Pluto. I'll read it here where he begins about
Our case, dear Proserpine. Let's see. He writes—
"Mercury tells me old Dame Ceres fights
Against the marriage, as her son-in-law,

I ask how you admire her gift of jaw? (*We must leave the delineation of CERES's countenance to the genius of the actor.*) I myself think Miss Prossy is the wife

* "Familiarity breeds contempt." We are afraid that Ceres so designated the bolts of Jove.

To make you happy. (PLUTO nods approval, and he and PROSSY exchange furtive smiles.) So, to end the strife,

If nought she's eaten since she came below,
Back to her mother you must let her go. (CERES looks meaningfully at PROSERPINE.)

(Not likely she is so abstemious, though.)

But if she's picked up the minutest crumb,
She's yours for ever, as I am."

Ceres.

Well, come !

My daughter Proserpine may leave with me !

Asc. Don't be so fast, old lady.

Pluto.

We shall see.

Ceres. Speak ; tell them, child. (PROSERPINE hesitates, and looks alternately at her mother and husband, then timidly says—) Pray, who has seen me eat ?

Ceres. (Triumphantly.) Now then, my gentlemen, I think you're beat.

Asc. (On a signal from PLUTO.) How about pomegranates ?

(PROSERPINE does not answer. As though to break the silence.)

Ceres.

A horrid fruit !

Asc. How about pomegranates ?

Ceres. (Aside.)

Persistent brute !

Asc. Did you ne'er taste of mine, your majesty ? (She bows.

"She stoops to concur."

Ceres.

You atrocious spy !

Pluto. (Rushing towards PROSERPINE.) Mine, without doubt, dear Proserpine, are you.

Oh ! say you love me !

Pros. (without looking at CERES.) Yes, I do, I do.

Ceres. You do ? You wicked, bad, ungrateful child !

Pros. E'en so.

Ceres. Then I am "stick, stark, staring wild."

(*To ASCALAPHUS, who laughs.*) I'll give you chase, you simpering young ass. [*ASCALAPHUS takes flight.*]

My nails are of full growth.

(*To PLUTO, who attempts to detain her.*) Nay, let me pass ; I'll change him to an owl. Such arrant sneaks Should surely be enrolled amongst the *beaks*.

Pluto. And now, my wife, my own, I swear to you, Your father's dictum you shall never rue. Light of this darksome world you're pledged to be ; For half the year dwell here below with me ; And when you, love, with Ceres will go stay, Business shall call me quite another way.

Pros. (*placing her hand in PLUTO's, and looking fondly at him.*) Thus have I found a haven on the sea Of life. (*To the audience.*) Young ladies, do not copy me In disobedience ; who can tell ? All bad beginnings may not end as well.

[*The curtain falls for a moment, but rises again to discover a tableau, in which PLUTO and PROSERPINE are standing lovingly together, whilst CERES, in the background (a whip concealed in her left hand), appears to be attempting to put salt on the tail of an owl (stuffed), which perches at a respectful distance.*

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